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General Assembly

Thirtieth special session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 20 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft .... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Cardi (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. K. Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law of the Republic of Singapore.

Mr. Shanmugam (Singapore): Singapore is happy to be a participant at this special session of the General Assembly.

To discuss the global drug problem, we need to start by asking a fundamental question: what kind of society do we want for our people? All of us want the same things — peace, prosperity, progress, equality of opportunities and a good quality of life for people. Those things cannot be achieved without safety and security, which are the key building blocks for any society. In that context, the questions are as follows. What impact do drugs have on the kind of society that all of us want? How do we deal with drug abuse in our communities, and what is the best approach? During the next three years before the special session in 2019, we will need to develop consensus on those questions.

We are now at a crossroads because of several factors. Countries have tried to fight the scourge of drugs and have been unsuccessful. Tens of thousands of their citizens have been killed and their societies have been seriously impacted. Parts of those countries are controlled by drug lords. Some countries have not been so fundamentally affected. Their drug situation is broadly under control and the problem is contained within certain segments of the population. For countries in that situation, an acceptance of drugs in their societies seems attractive. Therefore, they seek harm reduction — or, effectively, legalization. Others, like Singapore, focus on tackling drug trafficking through supply reduction and combating drug abuse through demand reduction.

When we go down the road of harm reduction, I do not think we should be under any illusion: drugs harm the abuser, his family and the community. We have had experts from our Institute of Mental Health conduct a literature review of journal articles over a period of time. They studied more than 500 articles from reputable medical journals, and the evidence was clear: cannabis is harmful. It can cause irreversible damage to the brain and to cognitive ability. It is addictive. One in 10 regular users develops dependence, and that increases to 1 in 2 among daily users. I heard a lot yesterday about a science-based approach to drugs. What I have just stated is science-based. Drugs harm us. We would not knowingly and happily give drugs to our teenage children, would we? We might accept it and deal with it if they abused drugs, but we would not voluntarily give them drugs. Let us therefore be clear about the harmful effects of drugs.

Our approach is this. We are located in a difficult environment. We are near several major drug-production

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centres. We believe that drugs will destroy our society. With more than 200 million people travelling through our borders every year, and given Singaporeans' purchasing power, a soft approach would mean our country would be awash with drugs. That is why we have adopted a comprehensive, balanced, sustained and tough approach to tackling both supply and demand. The results speak for themselves. We are relatively drug-free, and the drug situation is under control. There are no drug havens, no no-go areas or zones, no drug-production centres, no needle-exchange programmes. Our stance on drugs has allowed us to build a safe and secure Singapore for our people.

I heard many speeches yesterday, both in the plenary and at the round tables, with soaring rhetoric on the rights of people to access narcotics. The argument was presented as a dichotomy — human rights and dignity on the one hand, versus oppression, on the other. Maybe that rhetoric is based on the experience in some countries. It sounds like a lot of straw-man arguments to us, because it is not based on facts.

Demand reduction does not have to mean no compassion or consideration for the abuser. It does not have to mean locking up the abuser, throwing away the keys and condemning him to a life of criminality. It is possible to be tough on traffickers, to be tough in prevention, to be tough on drug abusers and, at the same time, to help abusers psychologically, medically and economically without having to feed them drugs. It is possible to help many of them kick their habit and reintegrate into society.

We take a no-nonsense approach to abusers. For first-time and second-time young offenders, we focus on counselling. We do not detain them. We put them into a framework where we help them kick their habit and find jobs and reintegrate into society. There is a lot of focus on working with them, helping them. That is the middle way between locking everyone up and treating them as criminals, and the alternative of feeding them drugs. The middle way is to focus on them and to try to help them kick their habit. Sometimes a cold-turkey approach is necessary. Sometimes detention is necessary, but not always. Make an assessment, believe in the dignity of the human potential to kick the habit and lead a life free of crime. It is easier to feed them with drugs. It is more difficult, more intensive and takes more resources to actually work with them and try to rehabilitate them. That is what we try to do.

In the 1990s we arrested over 6,000 drug abusers per year; now it is about 3,000. That is against a backdrop of a more prosperous Singapore, where people have more money to spend on drugs, and amid a worsening regional drug situation in which the supply of drugs has mushroomed. We have actually halved the number of abusers. What that means is that 3,000 lives have been saved every year from the scourge of drugs. Our recidivism rates have also come down from 60 per cent to 30 per cent.

Let us be clear also on the effect of drugs on criminality. In most countries, including Singapore, if one looks at the crimes and at the offenders, they will either be related to drugs or they will have antecedents relating to drugs.

How do we protect the victims of drugs? I see a lot of rhetoric on the rights of abusers, but what about the victims? What do we do with them? Do we talk about the rights of babies born with a drug dependency because their mothers have been taking drugs? They are infants who are already drug-dependent.

In Singapore, we want the right to decide for ourselves that anyone can walk safely anywhere, that a 10-year-old girl can use public transport and that a lady can walk out at any time of the day or night — and if one drives around one will see ladies outside in their shorts, exercising. Those are among the rights that we value fundamentally. We have achieved that because we have fought a successful battle against drugs.

We have handed out some statistics on Singapore to give context and to explain why we cherish what we have achieved and why we are not prepared to give it up. We will change our position if people can show us, based on evidence, that drugs are good for the person taking them — or at least have a neutral effect — and that the crime situation will not get worse and that the rest of society will not pay a price for them. We are not very impressed with rhetoric alone. Good speeches are one thing, enjoying safety and security at the level I have identified — letting one's 10-year-old child take public transport — that is different. I say to anyone with a different view: come forward. I am prepared to compare our experiences with any city that you choose. Show me a model that works better and delivers a better outcome for citizens, and we will consider changing. If that cannot be done, then do not ask me to change.

Between now and 2019, we need to come to consensus on how we can move forward as one global community to tackle drugs. Every country should have the right to choose the approach that works best for them. For us, the choice is clear: we want a drug-free Singapore, not a drug-tolerant Singapore. We want to be part of a drug-free Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and this comes from a country over 50 years old that is now ranked number one in ASEAN on the rule of law index, within the top five of where to be born in the world, within the top five in terms of quality of life and the index of social achievement, education and health care. If others want me to change, they must show me a better way.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Sophie Lohde, Minister of Health of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Ms. Lohde (Denmark): I refer to the statement delivered by the observer of the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/S-30/PV.1), a statement fully supported by the Government of Denmark.

The Government of Denmark welcomes this opportunity for Member States to review the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Progress has been achieved since its adoption, in 2009. However, the drug problem continues to present challenges to the health, safety and well-being of people who use drugs and to society as a whole. Allow me to dwell on a few points that are essential for the achievement of further progress.

Drug policies should be balanced. Prohibition and control cannot stand alone. Supply reduction has to be balanced with a sharp focus on evidence-based prevention, treatment and harm reduction, including the reduction of drug-related deaths. It is important to keep in mind that the overall aims of drug policies are the health and welfare of human beings, as well to address drug abuse and the harms resulting from it.

Against that backdrop, harm-reduction measures have been introduced in Denmark, and they have proved to be an essential element of our drug policy. This approach is based on the conviction that drug policies should be built on human rights. Everybody, including people who use drugs, has the right to be treated with dignity. Consequently, the Government of Denmark deeply regrets that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) does not address the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related crimes. Denmark is opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances. To achieve further progress, it is also essential that civil society be involved in drug policies at the national and international levels.

Despite our joint efforts, we are still facing challenges — not least the number of drug-related deaths and the proportion of harm resulting from drug abuse. Balanced and evidence-based drug policies built on human rights and developed and implemented through the involvement of civil society are essential to meet those challenges.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Jane Philpott, Minister of Health of Canada.

Ms. Philpott (Canada): I am honoured to participate in this special session of the General Assembly.

A few weeks ago, in preparation for this event, I met with a group of non-governmental organizations in Ottawa. There were lawyers, doctors and highly articulate activists, but the most powerful voice of all belonged to a mother. She was there to tell the story of her young daughter, who lost her life due to complications of substance use. She described watching her daughter slip away, as she struggled to access the treatment and services that should have been available to save a beautiful, fragile life. Stories like that are far too commonplace. Countless lives are cut short due to overdoses of licit and illicit substances.

Today, I stand before the General Assembly as Canada's Minister of Health to acknowledge that we must do better for our citizens. I am proud to stand up for a drug policy that is informed by solid scientific evidence and uses a lens of public health to maximize education and minimize harm.

As a doctor who has worked in both Canada and sub-Saharan Africa, I have seen too many people suffer the devastating consequences of drugs, drug-related crime and ill-conceived drug policy. Fortunately, solutions are within our grasp.

In my own country, I am impressed with the work of Insite, a supervised consumption site where people with addiction can access the care and support they need. I am proud at how quickly we are making naloxone antidote kits available to save lives from overdoses.

(*spoke in French*)

I sense an urgency to work together to find solutions, whether for big cities or for remote indigenous communities.

I know that goodwill also exists internationally. Indeed, I was heartened by the recent reminder by the President of the International Narcotics Control Board that we must put health and welfare at the centre of a balanced approach to treaty implementation.

(*spoke in English*)

Our approach to drugs must be comprehensive, collaborative and compassionate. It must respect human rights while promoting shared responsibility. And it must have a firm scientific foundation.

In Canada, we will apply those principles with regard to marijuana. To that end, we will introduce legislation in the spring of 2017 that ensures we keep marijuana out of the hands of children, and profits out of the hands of criminals. While that plan challenges the status quo in many countries, we are convinced it is the best way to protect our youth while enhancing public safety.

Canada will continue to modernize its approach to drug policy. Our work will embrace upstream prevention, compassionate treatment and harm reduction. We will work with law-enforcement partners to encourage appropriate and proportionate criminal justice measures. We know it is impossible to arrest our way out of this problem.

Addressing problematic drug use is a shared challenge. The solutions are also collective, involving Governments, indigenous peoples, civil society, youth, scientists and key United Nations agencies.

I acknowledge that other countries and cultures will pursue approaches that differ from Canada's. I believe that, if we respect one another's perspectives and seek common ground, we can achieve our shared objective of protecting our citizens. Better yet, we can improve their lives.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bernard Nottage, Minister of National Security of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Mr. Nottage (Bahamas): The Bahamas is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, as we lend our support to cooperate in countering the global illegal drug trade and, specifically, the security challenges of the Bahamas. We are especially pleased that underpinning the discussions of the Assembly is the resolve to improve the effectiveness of our responses to the drug problem in the mutual interests of all States.

The Bahamas is on the front line of drug control — and has been there for more than 40 years now — because of the serious drug problem we face and our commitment to national action and to bilateral, regional and international cooperation in this area. Our country is strategically situated on the way from illicit drug production centres in Central and South America and the Caribbean and on the way to North America and Europe. It is a sparsely populated archipelago, with vast water borders and hundreds of islands without permanent populations.

Cocaine and marijuana, the signature drugs produced in the region, are also the principal drugs in the transit traffic into and through the Bahamas. A coalition of transnational criminals, including Bahamians, continues to traffic drugs primarily through the country's maritime space in craft of all kinds, including coastal freighters and go-fast boats.

There is an intrinsic link between the Bahamas's current national security problems and the illicit drug trade. Let me refer in particular to our serious challenges stemming from arms trafficking, human smuggling, illegal immigration and trafficking in persons. Those illicit activities — particularly arms trafficking, a definite offshoot of the drug trade — tend to rest on the platform created by drug trafficking. Consequently, a single trafficking exercise may now involve drugs, guns and illegal immigrants.

The introduction of illegal weapons in particular significantly compounds the country's security situation. Guns have become the weapon of choice in the perpetration of violent crime. But we are determined that drug trafficking, crime and criminality should not jeopardize the economic, social and political stability and development of our country.

Against that backdrop, and with reference to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, the current drug policies of the Bahamas have focused on an appropriate balance between the traditional law-enforcement approaches and alternative development programmes, including public health approaches.

In 1983, Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos, known as OPBAT, was established as a multi-agency, international drug-interdiction effort focused on stopping the flow of illegal drugs from South and Central America and the Caribbean to the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and the United States. To date, it is estimated that OPBAT has reduced the flow of cocaine through the Bahamas from 80 per cent of that entering the United States to 10 per cent, and is considered one of the most successful counter-drug enforcement initiatives in the region.

The Bahamas is about to launch a $20 million citizen security and justice programme. Key among its objectives is the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, including those serving time for drug-related offences. The National Anti-Drug Secretariat, which is our national coordinating body for all anti-drug efforts, conducts research studies on drug use and abuse in order to direct new policy focus. The Bahamas also anticipates the establishment of drug treatment courts to provide an alternative to incarceration for drug-dependent offenders through treatment and rehabilitation.

Since youths are disproportionately represented as both victims and perpetrators of drug-related crime and violence, the Bahamas has embarked upon a series of initiatives focused on at-risk youth. For example, we recently established a national drug-free schools day, when students, educators and parents are engaged in creating a positive learning environment that is drug free. We have also begun the process of providing drug-prevention training for all school-based police officers and guidance counsellors through the International Centre for Certification and Education of Addiction Professionals.

We look forward to taking up new leadership roles in international anti-drug efforts. At the Organization of American States Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) fifty-eighth regular session, held in Peru last November, the Bahamas was elected to the position of Vice-Chair — the first time we have assumed that role. We look forward to chairing a meaningful and productive sixtieth regular session of CICAD in our beautiful country in November.

As we begin to set an ambitious new agenda and benchmarks towards 2030, we look forward to intensified global efforts relative to international security to counter those challenges that threaten to destabilize our country. I give my assurances that the Bahamas is a willing and committed partner in the process to effectively address the world drug problem. The Bahamas will spare no effort to promote a peaceful society and respect for the rule of law within our borders and beyond.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dario Nakić, Minister of Health of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Nakić (Croatia): Allow me to commend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs secretariat and the Board for the special session for the considerable efforts put into the preparatory process for this highly important event. This session gives us an opportunity to extensively discuss policy issues as they pertain to the current drug problems we face around the globe and to rethink our approaches and goals.

We have to say openly that present drug policies are not producing the expected results, and therefore cannot continue without modifications. It is about time for a paradigm shift, which will inevitably lead to drug policy reform.

It is evident that tackling the global drug problem from only one perspective — punishment and the punitive dimension — has negative impacts on health and human rights, making the cure worse than the disease. With that in mind, the Republic of Croatia does not support the death penalty in any circumstance, including for drug-related offences. We reiterate that the death penalty undermines human dignity while failing to act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

We have to approach the drug problem as a public health issue to the same degree that we have regarded it as a public safety issue. However, at the same time we cannot afford polarization. Drug phenomena cross many academic disciplines, so it is essential to think and act with a multidisciplinary approach. That is the only path to ensuring coherence among health, social and justice policies.

One of the biggest concerns is the rapid spread of new psychoactive substances. We are obliged to raise awareness about the risk of using such new substances and other drugs within existing prevention programmes. The widespread trend of polysubstance use often involves a combination of licit and illicit substances.

That prompts us to focus on an integrated policy on substance use that should also cover a wide range of other addictive behaviours.Let me briefly address a few elements of outstanding importance to the Republic of Croatia.

In recent years, the Republic of Croatia has continuously worked on enhancing its national drug policy by taking into consideration the global drug policy shift towards an evidence-based approach. As part of the cost assessment process, we have also developed indicators and tools to evaluate the cost-benefit ratio of the various measures implemented at the national level.

We have to be aware that in many regions of the world there remains a high incidence of blood-borne diseases among people who inject drugs. The Republic of Croatia has a long-standing tradition of risk- and harm-reduction programmes, which has resulted in very low HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs — below 1 per cent — while the prevalence of the hepatitis C virus dropped from its peak of 71 per cent in the early 2000s to 25 per cent in 2014. Those measures also contributed to the significant reduction in drug-related mortality as well as to public health in general.

The Republic of Croatia is very committed to reintegrating drug users into society. In the framework of our social reintegration project, which was endorsed in 2007, a spectrum of various social interventions is being applied, from psychosocial support to assistance with education, employment and housing. The project reduced the stigma associated with drug use and motivated a considerable number of drug users to participate in re-education programmes, and the end result has been an increase in their employment rate.

We strive towards recovery from problematic substance misuse as a final goal of our national policies. It is important to point out that all of the programmes are being implemented in association with civil-society organizations, which provide considerable support in our efforts to improve the health and quality of life of drug users in the Republic of Croatia. Their contribution through providing recommendations during decision-making processes is of great value, and they are considered as equal partners during the implementation phase.

Returning to the global dimension, I highly welcome the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) adopted at this special session. It proves that, despite significant differences in the national drug-control policies of the Member States, it is possible to reach an agreement in formulating global drug policy through constructive dialogue.

I conclude by quoting Mahatma Gandhi:

> "The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems."

I am convinced that on the basis of a constructive dialogue, we will succeed in making the best of our full potential and in closing the gap between what we do and what we are capable of doing with our national drug-control policies. That will enable us to effectively contribute to solving the world drug problem.

Finally, let me end with the words of the great Croatian poet, Aritun Gustav Matos:

> "It is most difficult to be alone and find yourself."

Let us therefore help them to find themselves.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Emmanuel Caparas, Secretary of the Department of Justice of the Republic of the Philippines.

Mr. Caparas (Philippines): I wish a blissful morning to everyone. The Philippine delegation congratulates His Excellency Ambassador Khaled Shamaa on his election as Chair of the Board for this special session. Under his stewardship, we know that much can be accomplished in these three days.

Back home in the Philippines, we find ourselves once again on the cusp of political change. The general elections to be held in less than three weeks will have a direct impact on governmental policies and the direction in the next six years. Be that as it may, our nation's desire to win the war on illegal drugs is unwavering. Along with the other Member States, we remain committed to waging that war under the guidance of an integrated and balanced strategy. In that regard, we wish to put on record three basic tenets underlying our commitment.

First, all of our country's local and national policies, initiatives and efforts against prohibited drugs are in faithful accordance with the three international conventions on drug control. Secondly, we remain firm and resolute in our opposition to all calls to legalize controlled drugs, as emphasized in our statement at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic

Drugs, held in Vienna in March. Without conditions, we reiterate that statement here today. Thirdly, the Philippines does not support the imposition of capital punishment for drug-related offenses, or for any other criminal offence for that matter.

We are happy to report meaningful progress in our ongoing battle with the world drug problem. In the past 12 years, significant reductions in both the demand for and supply of prohibited drugs have been observed, as a result of aggressive measures undertaken by our law enforcement agencies. More regular and focused information campaigns in schools and local communities have likewise been effective. Such efforts at the grass-roots level of society — where the youth are especially vulnerable — have not only increased people's overall awareness, but also engendered in them a deeper appreciation of the problem.

On top of that, our Government continues to urge displaced individuals to instead engage in legitimate livelihood activities, such as abaca and silk farming. We have also adopted a compassionate approach in the treatment and rehabilitation of drug users, with the goal of their eventual reintegration into mainstream society. Those are all part and parcel of an existing national anti-drug plan of action, which is being implemented until 2020.

We recognize that the problem we face is complex and continuously evolving. Many challenges loom on the horizon, including the emergence of narco-politics, the emergence of foreign trafficking syndicates, the lingering threat of new drugs and banned substances and many more. Truly, our best-laid plans will be ineffective unless all nations unite against this foe. With the huge turnout of delegations at this special session, it is clear that we, as a global community and despite the seeming divergence in our respective approaches, will prevail.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Susana Mabel Malcorra, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic

Ms. Malcorra (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me to begin by referring to a deplorable tragedy in Argentina in the past few days, which led me to change my statement today. At dawn this past Saturday, five young people lost their lives as a result of having taken synthetic drugs at an electronic music concert, while five others remain hospitalized in critical condition. That unfortunate occurrence, which dealt an irreparable blow to Argentine society, is a clear display of how the scourge of drugs affects all countries and all people, without distinction, cutting short the potential and future of our youth and irreversibly damaging our families and society.

This special session must be a key point to renew and redouble our political commitment to confront the world drug problem. From this rostrum, we wish to reiterate our deepest condolences to and our solidarity with the families and loved ones of those young people affected by this tragedy, which, unfortunately, adds to the list of the countless victims of the drug problem throughout the world.

During the electoral process that led to the Government headed by President Mauricio Macri, the following three priorities were established for Government action: zero poverty, the fight against drug trafficking and the union of Argentines within democratic institutionalization. Those three pillars were confirmed by President Macri when he took office on 10 December 2015. One of the first actions of the new Administration was to recognize that Argentina was confronting a serious situation in the world drug problem. Recognizing the existence of the problem makes it possible to seek and achieve solutions.

The second aspect was to acknowledge that we were facing a problem that does not recognize limits or boundaries. In that regard, we contend that cooperation, guided by the principle of common and shared responsibility, is a priority, entailing collective and coordinated efforts and responsibilities. We therefore actively promote cooperation to exchange information and coordinate actions at the bilateral, regional, hemispheric and international levels, as well as within the specialized agencies that deal with the world drug problem.

On the international level, those actions mean that Argentina should again take up the leading role that it has played throughout its history, stemming from the principles and values to which our country has always adhered. In our domestic and international activities, we promote a comprehensive approach, balanced between the dimensions of supply restriction — the fight against illicit drug trafficking — and demand reduction — prevention and care.

With regard to supply, we foster concerted actions in cooperation, training and exchange of information and intelligence, aimed at disrupting drug trafficking chains; preventing the diversion of controlled substances and precursors from licit activities or through covert channels; and addressing other, related crimes, such as arms trafficking, corruption and money-laundering. If we fail to tackle the chain of financing, we will never finish our common task.

Turning to demand, we bear in mind that the ultimate goal is to put individuals at the centre of drug policies. We promote a shift in the central focus from the substance to the individual, as a subject of rights, while promoting social inclusion as a central element and an objective to be attained through public policies. Our perspective is based on attention to and the care, treatment and recovery of drug users, while promoting the elimination of attitudes of discrimination and stigmatization. The aforementioned approaches must, under all circumstances, be based on scientific evidence and contribute to the ultimate goal — the health and welfare of humankind and of persons.

Human rights — that is to say, the highest standards of physical and mental health recognized by international conventions — are an integral part of Argentina's position in confronting the world drug problem. In our national policies, we include the gender perspective, as well as specific approaches for vulnerable groups. And it could not be otherwise, because for Argentina, those values are possible only because of the calling to unity and togetherness, another of the axes of President Macri's Administration, which I mentioned at the beginning of my statement and which characterizes us as part of the international and regional systems committed to combating the world drug problem. This is the path that we must take as the State policy on human rights in connection to the world drug problem: to promote coexistence, eradicating prejudices, stigmatization and discrimination.

With regard to human rights, I want to also point out that in Argentina there is no death penalty, and we therefore strongly support the abolition of that punishment.

From the outset, Argentina participated in the work to convene this special session on the world drug problem. We have viewed the session as a unique opportunity to carry out an honest and sincere assessment of the advances and setbacks, achievements and failures, challenges and obstacles of current world drug policies. We recognize that a broad, fruitful and unrestricted debate has taken place. In that context, Argentina steadily participated in building consensus, which led to the adoption yesterday of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). We very much welcome the level of understanding reached and the consensus that human rights are an essential and indivisible element in addressing and solving the world drug problem. Consequently, we welcome the relevance accorded the issue not only in the outcome document, but throughout the whole negotiation process.

Our task is to work, through international cooperation, to achieve the complete implementation of the treaties for the international control of drugs, and to do so in full conformity with applicable human rights obligations. In so doing, we hope to promote protection and respect for human rights and the dignity of every individual in the context of programmes, strategies and policies related to the issue that brought us together today.

As stated at the start, we consider that the indispensable tool for confronting the world drug problem is international cooperation. We believe the outcome document embodies, above all, the possibility of implementing that cooperation in all aspects of the scourge that we now face. Ahead of us is the task of deepening international cooperation and strengthening national capacities. We must do so on the basis of a broad, balanced and multidisciplinary approach, reaffirming the principle of a common and shared responsibility and acknowledging that the global and cross-border implications of the phenomenon increase daily.

Since the beginning of the negotiations, we have affirmed that one of the principal results of the 2016 special session should be general consensus on access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. We welcome the fact that the outcome document reflects that concern, in conformity with the United Nations drug-control conventions. That fact implies a strong commitment, which we must reinforce and complement while ensuring periodic reviews of the lists of controlled substances and essential medicines. That is the only way we will be able to achieve internationally coordinated lists, based on scientific evidence and geared towards the objectives of the conventions, which will thus support the respective national decisions on listing.

Taking what was agreed in the outcome document, we stress the need to strengthen national capacities to detect and identify new psychoactive substances and to develop specific policies to face that problem. It was such substances that I mentioned with pain at the start of this statement. In the same sense, we must adopt measures aimed at reducing the use of the Internet for drug-related illicit purposes, including the promotion, illegal sale and trafficking of drugs.

Argentina emphasizes the need to continue to strengthen global and regional organs and political and technical organs specialized in the various aspects of the world drug problem. We call for strengthening joint work among relevant United Nations agencies that have direct or indirect competence in confronting the world drug problem.

Nearly two decades have passed since we held the last special session on the subject, in 1998. Perhaps the main lesson of this time is that we ought not to have waited so long to return to work on a problem that in no way exempts any country or region. This special session in 2016, and the time that will transpire until 2019 and beyond, afford an excellent opportunity to strengthen and multiply exponentially the cooperation and the work to developing drug policies based on science and scientific evidence, in the frontal attack against drug trafficking and, above all, with respect for human beings, without any distinctions, as the centre of such policies.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mikheil Janelidze, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mr. Janelidze (Georgia): At the outset, I would like to express my Government's appreciation for the convening of this special session, as it gives us a remarkable opportunity to recognize the progress achieved and to underline the need to further reinforce our collective efforts to address the world drug problem effectively.

We welcome the tangible results achieved in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The intensification of efforts to effectively counter the world drug problem and to successfully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Regrettably, the international community is still facing obstacles in promoting societies free of drug abuse worldwide. Despite our concerted efforts, the world drug problem continues to present a challenge to the health, safety and well-being of people around the globe.

I would like to highlight some important developments that have taken place in Georgia to ensure effective policy-making and intervention in the context of combating drug abuse and other drug-related activities. The Government of Georgia fully acknowledges the significance of a comprehensive approach consistent with international law, the three international drug-control conventions and relevant international standards.

At the national level, the anti-drug strategy and the subsequent action plan represent an essential component of national efforts. The strategy was elaborated in line with human rights standards, based on an analysis of the situation of the country. It encompasses four main components: reducing demand and harm, reducing supply, monitoring the drug situation in the country, and coordinating intergovernmental activities and fostering cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations.

Georgia has taken several institutional steps to that end. Since November 2011, anti-drug policy development and coordination, as well as revision and monitoring of the implementation of the strategy and action plan, have been conducted by the Inter-Agency Coordinating Council on Combating Drug Abuse. The National Drug Monitoring Centre, created in 2015, is an effective mechanism for collecting and analysing information on the drug situation in Georgia, introducing evidence-based scientific and practical methodologies.

As a part of a comprehensive and balanced approach, the criminal code was amended in 2015 to distinguish between criminal liability for the possession and for the distribution of drugs. The penalty for drug possession has been reduced, while in practice, sanctions other than imprisonment have been used in the majority of cases of drug possession. Georgia has also developed an integrated national mechanism for early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration. An important step in reducing drug-related mortality was the removal of the restraint factor for patients in dealing with an emergency, namely, that medical personnel are no longer obliged to inform law-enforcement bodies in cases of overdose. Since 2014, the substitution treatment programme has been made available to persons open to treatment.

Recently the country has endorsed the updated national strategy on HIV for 2016-2018, highlighting the main direction of the national efforts against HIV/AIDS aimed at stabilizing the HIV epidemic by 2020 and eliminating it by 2030. The Government is carrying out an unprecedented hepatitis C elimination programme. Patients are provided with the necessary tests for prediagnostic and treatment monitoring purposes and the latest drugs for the treatment of hepatitis C. As a secondary prevention initiative, social enterprises have been created for the employment of former drug addicts, providing rehabilitation opportunities through work and thereby facilitating social integration.

Under the national drug strategy, concrete steps are envisaged for primary prevention through educating the public and raising awareness. In 2014 a wide-scale anti-drug awareness campaign was launched to increase awareness of the risks of drug abuse and to promote a healthy lifestyle among the population. The challenges before us underline the need for a coordinated response through greater cooperation and partnership. Georgia is committed to further cooperating with the entire international community and the United Nations agencies in order to successfully counter the problems resulting from drug abuse.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rahmani Fazli, Minister of the Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Fazli (Islamic Republic of Iran) (*spoke in Farsi; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the few countries that has sustained huge losses in life and property, yet still has managed to deprive the merchants of death of the bulk of their illicit drugs, thereby protecting a part of the global community from the evil of addiction.

As part of its broad-based campaign, the Islamic Republic of Iran has dedicated more than 3,800 martyrs and 12,000 wounded persons in the course of its relentless campaign against illicit drugs, fighting against regional and transregional armed drug traffickers. It has spent billions of dollars equipping its border areas and creating physical barriers along the border to block drug flows into the country, as well as countering the flow of drugs towards other countries. In that way, more than 80 per cent of the world's opium and approximately 40 per cent of the world's heroin and morphine are seized in Iran on an average basis. Approximately 620 tons of different types of drugs were seized in Iran in 2015.

Meanwhile, in order to implement the guidelines established by the Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which attach special significance to the issue of narcotic drugs and addiction as the top priority of the country's social-harm-reduction programme, drug demand reduction programmes — including for prevention, treatment, harm reduction, rehabilitation and social reintegration — have been decisively implemented within the framework of a balanced strategy to reduce supply and demand.

These are some of the country's achievements. We provide 40 per cent coverage for the country's population in prevention programmes targeting families, educational settings, work places and communities. We have achieved 40 per cent voluntary referral of addicts and drug users to harm-reduction centres and treatment clinics, which is one of the highest figures in the world. President Rouhani's Administration adopted a community-based approach that promotes hope and prudence and calls for maximum public participation. In line with that, more than 85 per cent of the programmes for drug demand reduction, involving prevention, treatment, harm reduction and social supports, have been implemented by non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

A new approach has been adopted to protect recovered addicts, as well as those addicts undergoing treatment, through providing medical insurance, post-treatment services, vocational training and employment. There is also an approach that seeks to reduce the prison inmate population by implementing alternative punishment plans for drug-related offenders and providing harm reduction and treatment services in prisons. Moreover, there has been a 60 per cent reduction in HIV transmissions among intravenous drug user through developing harm-reduction interventions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that in adopting a balanced and comprehensive strategy for demand and supply reduction at the national, regional and international levels, in expanding regional and international cooperation — particularly the true realization of the principle of collective and international shared responsibility without political considerations — and in refraining from putting forth unnecessary topics in the course of collective decision-making, we will witness the results of the global campaign against illicit drugs in the not-so-distant future.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country on the front line of countering illicit drugs, is of the view that the three international drug-control conventions must be maintained as the cornerstone of the international drug-control system, due to their comprehensive and flexible nature. Meanwhile, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the main United Nations policy-making body in drug-related issues, must be supported. The Islamic Republic of Iran also supports the determining role of the International Narcotics Control Board in facilitating licit access to sedative drugs and fulfilling scientific needs. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as an executive body of the United Nations must be strengthened.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the strategy for sustainable development can greatly undermine the scourge of narcotics, provided that special significance is attached to alternative livelihoods aimed at reducing dependence on drug trafficking, drug production and drug-related offences. That necessitates countering illicit cultivation and destroying illicit crops, accompanied by the global community's participation, for the realization of alternative development programmes in regions susceptible to drug cultivation, trafficking in narcotics or drug addiction.

Within the framework of a balanced and integrated strategy, I wish to voice the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host an international conference on countering narcotic drugs and drug-related crimes along the Balkan route. The conference, in collaboration with UNODC and countries situated along the transit route, will examine means to enhance cooperation in combating drug-related money-laundering along that route, which is estimated at approximately $30 billion, as well as the possibility of conducting controlled delivery operations, detecting drug-trafficking ringleaders, seizing drug convoys and sharing experiences.

Since 2019 has been set as the year for the realization of the global community's objectives, the Islamic Republic of Iran presents the following proposals to be included in the agenda of the future meeting: adoption of a community-based approach and a plan for the protection of recovered addicts, addicts under treatment and their families as a successful measure; the need to examine methods for boosting retention among recovered addicts; the necessity of adopting new methods for effective detection of drug-related crimes through developing regional and international cooperation; the need to implement the international community's commitment concerning equipment and technical assistance to transit countries; the need for the international community to focus on containing the problem of drugs at the point of origin and in production zones through the implementation of alternative development, with priority given to security and sustainable development based on the principle of shared responsibility.

In that regard, I wish to once again express my country's readiness to implement the agreements reached among the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNODC on conducting a pilot project on alternative development in one of the provinces of Afghanistan, with the participation of the international community.

In conclusion, I hope that the special session on the world drug problem, while taking into account the achievements and challenges in this area, will prepare ground conducive to the realization of the goals set by the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action, based on full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the principle of equality by fulfilling the collective will and enabling the international community's participation in countering the world drug problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Michael Farrugia, Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity of the Republic of Malta.

Mr. Farrugia (Malta): It is indeed an honour for me to have the opportunity to share with the Assembly our experience with drug control and the resolutions we have adopted in our fight against the misuse of narcotic drugs.

Why do people become addicted to drugs, or to anything else for that matter? Is it because of a lack of willpower or a lack of moral principles? Is it because they get kicks from addiction? Maybe, but in reality it is more complex. We are dealing with a complex disease where quitting takes more than good intentions or a strong will. Drugs change the brain in a way that fosters compulsive drug abuse. Is quitting easy? Not really. Not even for those who are ready to do so. It is a big challenge that requires lots of willpower and where failure is possible.

Unfortunately, relapsing is too common. It takes patience and perseverance to get a drug addict back on his feet. For that reason, victims need help, support and evidence-based treatments to help them overcome this disease. Drug abuse and addiction have negative consequences for both the individual and society. Through scientific advances, we know more about how drugs work on the brain. We also know that drug addiction can be successfully treated, thereby aiding people to stop abusing drugs and lead productive lives.

We strongly believe that to beat this cruel vice, genuine victims of drugs need help — not court sentencing. Under the proposed law on drug decriminalization, published on 7 July 2014 in Malta, drug users no longer face a court sentence, but instead appear in front of a justice commissioner and, if deemed necessary, a social board made up of experts. Repeat offenders will be referred to a drug offenders rehabilitation board, presently headed by a former European Court of Human Rights judge. The board has the authority to impose mandatory rehabilitation orders. The focus is more on rehabilitation and care.

As of this year, anyone who is found in possession of up to 2 grams of heroin, cocaine or 2 pills of ecstasy or any similar substance will be subject only to a fine. It will be the same for the possession of 3.5 or less grams of cannabis. We have a very clear distinction between social users, street traffickers and drug barons. There is no room for trafficking or barons — they deserve to be treated for what they are and sentenced accordingly. Definitely, I am not taking about the death penalty. It is rather regrettable that no mention was made in regard to the abolition of the death sentence in the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

In harm reduction, we are focusing on present needs to prepare for the future: addressing different human dimensions, including the physical, socio-legal, psychological and mental aspects; and seeking the true and primary needs of persons suffering from serious drug-related problems through active, interdependent communication with service users. We are working on the following programmes.

First, for 20 years we have been distributing free syringes to drug users as a harm-reduction measure. We have had positive results, with only four cases of HIV, 15 cases of hepatitis C and one case of hepatitis B resulting from the sharing of needles.

Secondly, we offer free rehabilitation programmes in various Government agencies, and we fund other rehabilitation programmes through service agreements with appointed non-governmental organizations. Services are also offered free for all types of other addictions. In the coming months, we are introducing for the first time in Malta the rehabilitation of minors and adults who suffer from dual diagnoses, who, although free from drugs, are not able to live without substitute medicine.

Thirdly, we are dealing with victims, family and their immediate surroundings in a holistic way, with great emphasis on preparation for post-rehabilitation coupled with an intensive approach to aftercare. Furthermore, we developed an anti-poverty strategy within our community centres, as we understand that many drug addicts end up losing their job, which results in their being homeless. With the help of multidisciplinary teams and under the supervision of a social mentor, we have specialized, supported employment where recovering addicts will be given training and skill-building and the help of a job coach to help them reintegrate into the workforce.

We have recently introduced a residential halfway programme by which we subsidize the rent for the first three years, with 65 per cent for the first year, 50 per cent for the second year and 25 per cent for the third and final year, with the hope of these vulnerable persons making a 180-degree turn in their lives — from being a burden on our welfare and health system to being contributors towards our economy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Ms. Smith (Jamaica): Jamaica welcomes the convening of this special session. We appreciate the opportunity to share and work with the international community as we evaluate our efforts to date.

The current realities of the world drug problem compel us to formulate dynamic policy responses that complement our development objectives, while adhering to the rule of law. There is a pressing need to develop and implement balanced, multidimensional and innovative strategies. Given the grave threat that illicit drugs and transnational organized crime pose to our national security, Jamaica has undertaken targeted efforts to address the root causes of these problems. We are finalizing a five-year national drug plan and designing comprehensive demand-reduction programmes in the areas of prevention, early intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration. We have strengthened our laws to dismantle criminal organizations, prevent money-laundering and combat human trafficking.

In developing policies to address the world drug problem, we are cognizant that one size does not fit all. In Jamaica, cannabis has traditionally been used as a folk medicine and as a religious sacrament by practitioners of our indigenous faith, Rastafari. Such specific uses are not associated with illicit large-scale cultivation for trade. Last year, Jamaica amended its Dangerous Drugs Act. In doing so we also did several things. We decriminalized the possession of less than two ounces of cannabis, making it a ticketable offence rather than a felony offence. We created a legal regime governing the sacramental use of cannabis by Rastafarians. We established provisions for the medical, scientific and therapeutic uses of the plant; and we established a State authority to license, regulate and monitor the allowed uses.

While adhering to our obligations under the drug-control conventions, we maintain that countries should be allowed the flexibility to craft appropriate laws and policies that take account of other important elements. Those include differing cultural perspectives and practices, as well as the consideration of the health, well-being, human rights, human development and security of our citizens.

We contend that the classification of cannabis under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol is an anomaly and that the medical value of a substance must be determined by science and evidence-based analysis above other considerations. We will continue to abide by our international obligations, even as we work in close collaboration with the international community on designing balanced and innovative strategies to better address the world drug problem in all its dimensions.

With regard to the follow-up to this special session, Jamaica reiterates its call for the establishment of a mechanism to review the global drug-control architecture and make recommendations for the consideration of Member States on how best to recalibrate the world drug problem and the global response.

We reaffirm our common and shared responsibility to address the world drug problem. We emphasize the need to ensure system-wide coherence and enhanced collaboration between the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and other relevant agencies, including the International Narcotics Control Board, the World Health Organization, the Human Rights Council and the United Nations Development Programme.

We must move forward to make meaningful and effective progress in addressing the world drug problem. We must place health and human development at the centre of the process. We owe it to the current generation, in particular to our young people. We owe it to future generations. Let us not let them down.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Marlene Mortler, Federal Government Drug Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Ms. Mortler (Germany) (*spoke in German; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Millions of people around the world are suffering from poverty, crime and violence. While drugs are not the only reason to blame for their plight, they do have an appalling part to play.

What do we have to show for the international drug policy of recent decades? Can we continue on our current course?

Of course, we need effective law enforcement to control drug trafficking, money laundering and corruption — in fact, our agencies must be even better connected and coordinated internationally. We are on common ground in that regard. However, law enforcement alone will never be able to resolve the drugs issue. Instead, drug policy must put people and public health first.

Dependency is no moral failing; it is a disease — a disease that can be treated with good outcomes and, what is more, in line with human rights. Prevention, counselling, harm reduction and substitution treatment — that approach has an excellent track record in Europe. The success is obvious, namely, lower crime rates and fewer cases of HIV and hepatitis.

For drug policy to match the reality on the ground, it must provide for sentences that are reasonable. At Headquarters in New York, let us agree to only punish drug offences in line with the rule of proportionality. Indeed, let us go one step further and make it clear that the death penalty can never be a tool of human-rights-based drug policy.

Prevention, harm reduction and treatment efforts that are people-centred — those are the pillars of drug policy. Another is the prosecution of criminal networks. Yet I am convinced that our drug policy needs another cornerstone: an effective policy for alternative development strategies. People whose existence and livelihoods depend uupon growing drug crops need real, actual alternatives. They need financial support. They need help to help themselves. Therefore, Germany has set up a new programme called the Global Partnership on Drug Policies and Development. We are going to introduce it to delegations at Headquarters in New York.

Drugs destroy lives, ruin families, erode social structures and corrupt entire countries. That must change. Let us finally make human health the focus of our attention.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Martin van Rijn, Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Rijn (Netherlands): It is an honour to address this special session of the General Assembly on behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Holding the presidency of the European Union, the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by European Commissioner Mimica on behalf of the European Union and its member States yesterday (see A/S-30/PV.1).

I believe that this special session on the world drug problem is a unique opportunity to reflect on the goals and targets we committed to in 2009 and to take stock of the progress we have made to date. However, we also have the responsibility to look ahead towards 2019 and 2030.

Today, like every day, we will see the birth of more than 200,000 children into this world, 200,000 children that depend on us. I believe we have the obligation to let them grow up and develop in a safe and healthy environment without the threat of drug abuse and drug-related crime affecting their well-being. However, I also strongly believe that children that are not as fortunate should at least have an opportunity to receive appropriate treatment and care without prejudice and without disproportionate punishment.

Let us look forward. Let me share with the Assembly the elements of drug policies that we believe are key to get to the result we want at the international and national levels, elements that the Netherlands and many other countries have already had positive experiences with and that we should take advantage of.

During recent years, global drug policy has showed a steady transition towards a more balanced approach as compared to a repressive approach that was dominant for decades. It is important to emphasize that it is not a matter of choosing between approaches, but of combining them in the best and most effective way. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution. Each country should find a balanced approach that suits its specific local challenges and circumstances. This is entirely consistent with the international drug conventions, as Minister Sipp from the International Narcotics Control Board stated yesterday so very clearly. The conventions provide States with the flexibility to adopt measures, such as treatment and rehabilitation, as an alternative or in addition to criminal sanctions for offenders.

A balanced approach towards drug policies also means discussing a wide-ranging public health-based approach. Focusing on the rights and needs of drug users is very effective. Through evidence-based prevention programmes fewer people will start using drugs; by developing new treatment programmes we are better capable to treat addictions; and by providing risk and harm-reduction interventions we are better able to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among users, but also to protect our general population. It is 2016, and it is time to recognize that risk- and harm-reduction measures are not only a proven effective way to prevent more HIV/AIDS infections, but also to protect our societies. Let us embrace such interventions.

Therefore, I am very pleased that in the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) we strongly call for enhanced involvement by the World Health Organization (WHO) in international drug policy. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Chan, who spoke here yesterday and stressed the urgency of this issue, and her commitment to a strengthened role for WHO in the years to come. Her words make me confident that, with the help of WHO and other United Nations institutions, today is the first step towards an ambitious agenda for 2019 where harm reduction, prevention and treatment are at the centre of our attention.

At the same time we need to continue to pursue our efforts in tackling transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. We should focus on the implementation of effective law-enforcement policies and cooperation to address production, manufacturing and the trafficking of illicit drugs, including money-laundering and corruption. Resources are limited; we need to spend them where they are most effective. Therefore, I believe that we should not focus too much on drug users and minor, non-violent offences related to drug use. Organized crime is a much bigger threat.

Secondly, I would like to underline the importance of evidence-based drug policymaking. If we really want to live up to the ambition of having a sound evidence-based approach on drug policy, we need to move away from unrealistic and ideological ambitions. We need to continue together to build such an evidence base to keep improving our interventions. Sometimes interventions work, sometimes they do not. That is the way evidence is established: with trial and error, with monitoring, with evaluation and by sharing best practices. Let us learn from our successes and our failures.

I would like to underline that the death penalty is not an evidenced-based intervention. The Netherlands opposes the application of the death penalty in all circumstances and without exception. The same clear signal was expressed yesterday by the observer of the EU, its member States and 28 other like-minded countries after the adoption of the outcome document. It is crucial, when addressing the world drug problem, to apply the principle of proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences. We need to prevent overcrowded prisons and all the negative health consequences related to them. I would like to invite all parties to consider alternative measures to conviction or punishment for drug-related, nonviolent offences of a minor nature.

Finally, I welcome the emphasis placed on the outcomes of this special session ensuring the availability and affordability of controlled medicines for medicinal and scientific purposes. That is a very urgent matter. An overly strict interpretation of the United Nations conventions, complex import and export rules and a fear of addiction mean that some important medications are unavailable in hospitals in developing countries. That is unacceptable. I therefore call on parties present in this Hall to live up to these words on paper and ensure quick and thorough implementation.

We look forward to an open and meaningful discussion towards 2019 and beyond.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sagala Ratnayake, Minister of Law and Order and Southern Development of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Ratnayake (Sri Lanka): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening this special session dedicated to one of the most relevant contemporary issues, the world drug problem. I extend my warmest greetings to the President and the members of the Bureau, as well as to all representatives gathered in this Hall with the courageous commitment to fight the drug menace to eradicate it from our societies.

The Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is conscious of the illicit production, trafficking and abuse of drugs in the country; the adverse effects of drug use on the health of drug dependents; the upsurge in drug-related crime; the draining of human, natural and financial resources; and the destruction of individuals, families and communities due to drug use.

Furthermore, the Government is fully conscious of its international obligations, in particular those flowing from the Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, all ratified by our Government. Sri Lanka also steered the negotiations on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and is a party to the SAARC Convention.

The Government reaffirms its political will and determination to tackle the drug problem locally and assist in this cause internationally by reviewing the existing national policy, which was formulated more than a decade ago. All institutions that come under the Government's purview will be required to adhere to this national policy. The non-governmental agencies concerned are expected to be active partners in the implementation of the Government policy. The fulfilment of the social responsibilities of private-sector institutions within the framework of the policy is also critical to drug prevention and control.

The overall goal of the Government in relation to the drug problem is an ambitious one: to reduce the drug supply and drug use to minimum levels by 2020. This goal will be pursued relentlessly by all drug law enforcement agencies and the Government agencies directly involved in drug-demand reduction, including provincial and local administrations and other agencies that have a potential for contributing to the end objective along with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private-sector agencies.

The Government will adopt a broader approach to drug abuse control within the context of human development, focusing particularly on the links among drug abuse, poverty reduction, crime prevention and improving health. The Government believes that the most effective approach to the drug problem would comprise a comprehensive, balanced and coordinated strategy. In such a strategy, supply control and demand reduction will reinforce each other. A high sense of shared responsibility will be the norm.

Government institutions, NGOs, and private-sector and other agencies will be involved in implementing drug-control strategies that include effective enforcement of laws against production, smuggling, trafficking, the sale and use of illicit drugs; effective enforcement of controlled imports, exports, the distribution of drugs and precursor chemicals under control; the prevention of the use of drugs and the reduction of the adverse consequences of drug abuse; and support for regional and international initiatives related to drug-abuse prevention and control.

The Precursor Control Authority of Sri Lanka controls 23 identified precursor chemicals that make an immense contribution to economic development. It prevents the illegitimate production of psychotropic substances from those chemicals. The Precursor Control Authority monitors the import, transport, distribution, storage and use of precursor chemicals and supervises the premises where such activities are performed.

In addition, our concern has extended to reducing abuse of prescribed drugs and over-the-counter medications, which has been identified as an emerging issue.

The Sri Lanka Government's determination in law enforcement was recently highlighted by the detection of 110 kilograms of heroin trafficked by sea, where nationals from several countries were involved.

The Government of Sri Lanka has taken initial steps to establish a centre for sharing intelligence on drug trafficking in order to empower national institutions to be able to disseminate accurate information in the South Asian and South-East Asian regions.

Furthermore, the Government provides treatment and rehabilitation services to those who abuse drugs, using accepted screening and assessment methodologies implemented by the Government and non-governmental and private institutions in the country. We have adopted the requisite legislation on the treatment of drug offenders, which, inter alia, empowers our judicial authorities to prescribe treatment to offenders in State or recognized private institutions in lieu of punishment.

The Government works towards its aim of reducing and totally eliminating substances through effective analysis of social and scientific research on narcotics and psychotropic substances using evidence-based practices. Outreach services, aftercare and rehabilitation services necessary for effective treatment interventions are provided throughout the country, especially with a focus on clients, who are away from residential treatment programmes.

Sri Lanka highlights the need of using medical and psychological treatment and ensuring the welfare of specially identified social groups, such as children, women and youth, who are affected by the negative consequences of substance abuse.

In conclusion, I wish to assure the Assembly that Sri Lanka stands committed to extend its fullest cooperation to all international efforts to combat the world drug problem, a problem that has no borders and threatens to destabilize all of our societies.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Svatopluk Němeček, Minister of Health of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Němeček (Czech Republic): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to address this historic meeting on behalf of the Czech Republic. It is an honour for me and my country, which fully aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

We have gathered here because of the deep concerns with regard our ability to achieve that which we committed to in 2009. At the same time, we are gathered at a time when overwhelming scientific evidence on our progress in terms of the global drug problem is available. Let me briefly draw the Assembly's attention to the report of the Johns Hopkins-Lancet Commission on Drug Policy and Health, whicht was published very recently. As many of those present know, *The Lancet* is one of the two most prestigious scientific medical journals worldwide. The report conclusively shows that the international drug policy, as we have known it, has failed dramatically. Intended to protect people, but based on prohibition and criminalization, our efforts have had detrimental effects on public health and public security. The war on drugs has fuelled an epidemic of infections, particularly HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis, and an epidemic of fatal overdoses in people who use drugs. The enforcement of drug prohibition exacerbates all of those risks, affecting not only drug users but all citizens. That is also true with regard to the de facto prohibition of controlled medicines for most of the global population, in particular medical opioids and medical cannabis.

If we do not admit our failures, we are doomed to fail again. We deeply regret that a denial of evidence prevailed in several parts of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) . It is a paradox that some of those worst-hit by the harms related to drug policies have proved to be the fiercest deniers.

The Czech Republic endorses the outcome document of this special session because we strongly believe it is not the end of the debate, but only the start. If we want to maintain the global drug regulation regime, then we will have to continue the discussion without interruption and persist in our efforts to find very concrete measures between now and 2019.

Therefore, the Czech Republic fully supports the call of the European Union to enhance coordination among the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations entities, especially the World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We also want to further enhance the quality of scientific monitoring of the drug situation and to strengthen the involvement of non-governmental organizations. The Czech Republic can and will use its own experience to demonstrate the public-health and public-security benefits of a human-rights oriented drug policy based on open discussion and scientific evidence. We strongly believe that human drug policies should care for humans first of all, not for drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. María Esther Reus González, Minister of Justice of Cuba.

Ms. Reus González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have all come to this special session with high expectations and the desire to strengthen international cooperation to effectively counter the dreadful world drug problem, which, far from decreasing, is getting worse and growing. How not to be worried, when we have failed to reduce drug demand, production and trafficking, as required under the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem of 2009? How not to be worried, knowing that at least 246 million people consume illicit drugs, according to estimates of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime?

The scourge of drugs extends to all geographic regions. It generates and perpetuates cycles of poverty, violence, various criminal behaviours, social exclusion and impaired health situations. It will be very difficult to solve the problems associated with mass production and trafficking in drugs from the South if the majority demand from the North is not eliminated. Today, more than ever, it is important to recognize and implement the principle of common and shared responsibility. This scourge is not going to be solved in all its aspects if countries continue to be militarized — attacking peasants, disrespecting national sovereignty and disregarding the specificities of each region.

The scourge will not be solved either through the legalization of drugs or addressing them as harmless substances. To consider this as a solution could involve accepting that States cannot or will not fulfil their obligations to combat crime and protect the health of their citizens. That is why Cuba does not favour such an approach. It opens dangerous gaps in the stability of our nations and can affect other equally complex transnational crimes.

It is unfair to make generalizations and maintain that the tough approach on drugs is responsible for the current magnitude of this scourge. More in-depth analysis is required, including with respect to how anti-drug policies have been interpreted and implemented in some countries and regions.

It is also necessary to tackle the root causes of the problem without forgetting, in that context, the impact of an unjust, egocentric and inequitable international order, and of a globally imposed political, economic and social model in which the corrupting power of those who seek profit at all costs prevails. Those factors are the essential breeding ground of the drug problem and other related scourges.

There are experiences that demonstrate that, when comprehensive preventive educational policies are developed, implemented and led by the State, it is possible to effectively combat drugs. Social inclusion, community participation, universal access to treatment and rehabilitation, without discrimination of any kind, complemented by a tough stance on crime and broad international cooperation, add to that possibility. By upholding those principles and with great effort, our country has managed to prevent the production, trafficking and use of illicit substances from becoming a significant social problem.

Likewise, we have prevented our country from becoming a platform for drug trafficking and related crimes. The Cuban revolution, although without abundant resources and under a harsh economic, commercial and financial blockade, has been successful in dealing with drugs because of the strong political will of the Government and the support of the people.

This is the time to reaffirm the political commitment of States and other actors to the international legal framework for drug control, of which the three United Nations conventions on drugs are the cornerstone. We reiterate our support for resolution S-30/1, which is a reflection of a fitting global consensus, and reaffirm our commitment to the statements on drugs made by the leaders of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

I will conclude my statement by reiterating Cuba's absolute commitment to achieving societies free of illicit drugs, which is vital to achieving sustainable development and the well-being of our peoples.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lejeune Mbella Mbella, Minister for External Relations of the Republic of Cameroon.

Mr. Mbella Mbella (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Cameroon welcomes the convening of this special session on the world drug problem, which continues to pose a serious threat to the health, safety and welfare of all humankind.

I warmly congratulate Mr. Lykketoft and the other members of the Bureau on their election, and I wish them every success in the conduct of our work.

On this occasion, I would also like to pay tribute to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their preparatory work, which should enable us to consider at this session the progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, which are two relevant texts adopted in March 2009.

To date and in the light of those documents, progress has certainly been made, but it is clear that many obstacles remain to be overcome, in particular the problem of reducing supply and demand, which is both the main cause and consequence of the world drug problem. Its impact in the areas of health, human rights, economy, justice and security is a serious concern for our States.

Cameroon, like most countries, is faced with the ever-expanding phenomenon of drug production, trafficking and drug consumption, with young people, unfortunately, as the foremost victims. Over 15,000 young people aged between 15 and 25 are regular users of cannabis. My country has reacted strongly to that situation. It is party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, as well as to almost all relevant international instruments that constitute the foundation of the international drug-control regime, reaffirmed by the outcome document for this session (resolution S-30/1, annex).

In addition, Cameroon has adopted a multisectoral national strategy focusing on awareness-raising and community mobilization to prevent drug addiction, centred on, among others, measures such as the organization of workshops to raise awareness and build capacity among community leaders, with the greater involvement and participation of civil society, including associations and non-governmental organizations and public and private media; the development of materials to raise awareness about the prevention of and fight against addiction; the organization and holding of educational talks; the projection of films and documentaries that focus primarily on the most vulnerable people; and the introduction of thematic programmes on the fight against drugs into curriculums. Moreover, in the area of institutions, a prevention centre was established within the National Committee for the Fight against Drugs with the main objective of reducing the consumption of new drugs.

Aware that this is not merely a criminal issue but also a public-health issue, Cameroonian authorities place special emphasis on both prevention and care, on the treatment and management of affected persons, on addiction within families, and on hospitals and health centres. In that regard, the Minister of Public Health signed a decree in April 2015 on the establishment, organization and functioning of centres for health, support and addiction prevention. Consultation meetings are also held between different ministries and agencies involved in the fight against drugs and the strengthening of law and public authority, under the coordination of the National Committee for the Fight against Drugs. The installation of drug-control devices in the two main international airports in Cameroon has also improved oversight of this scourge and reflects my Government's resolve to effectively combat the drug phenomenon.

We cannot say it enough: the extent and severity of the problems posed by drugs attest to their cross-cutting nature. They are global problems that affect every continent and every country, and are currently being compounded by their links to terrorism and organized crime, as evidenced by the frequent use of drugs by the members of such groups, especially the suicide bombers of the terrorist group Boko Haram, against which my country is waging a fierce fight. For that reason, a global response is required. International cooperation is therefore no longer an option, but a priority need that requires technical and financial assistance, as well as the strengthening of the capacities of those countries that request it, in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility, in order to address the drug problem.

The fight against this phenomenon can be successful only through concerted efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels, and through the sharing of experiences and good practices.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In that regard, Cameroon wishes to reaffirm its commitment to continue strengthening its prevention and management measures in order to address the world drug problem, and to work together with all countries and partners, such as UNODC and the African Union, in order to find lasting solutions to this problem. In that spirit, Cameroon would suggest, in follow-up to this special session, that a subregional meeting of the countries of the Economic Community of Central African States be held on the fight against drugs, with the support of the United Nations.

We welcome the consensual adoption of the document entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). This new instrument will contribute greatly to our common struggle against this global scourge.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency, Ms. Hannah Serwaa Tetteh, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana.

Ms. Tetteh (Ghana): I bring the General Assembly the warm greetings of His Excellency Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, as well as of the people of Ghana. It is an honour to speak on behalf of the Government of Ghana and to join other delegations in expressing Ghana's endorsement of and support for the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) adopted at the beginning of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. While the document expresses our joint commitment to effectively address and counter the world drug problem, it also provides the basis for our continued engagement in the years ahead to effectively tackle the major challenges that still persist around the globe.

For Ghana, this special session offers two possibilities. First, it provides a space to rethink global drug-control strategies. Secondly, it provides a space to build upon and strengthen those approaches to drug policy set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem that have proved workable.

The negotiation and development of the outcome document was a very constructive process, which helped to establish the important relationships among contemporary drug policy and public health, criminal justice and development as well as human rights, which are all vital elements in forging an integrated and balanced strategy to combat the world drug problem.

As one of the outcomes of this review process, Ghana would like to see flexibility in implementing any international drug policy not be treated as an encrypted synonym for unprincipled laissez-faire. Flexibility must be seen as a core part of a process of collective drug policy development within the United Nations. Such collective development must also be based on a more detailed and holistic analysis of what Member States and other stakeholders see as workable in drug policy governance and interventions. In other words, flexibility must be based on principled pluralism.

Ghana, like many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, is also concerned about inadequate opioid access for palliative care. It is estimated that nearly 90 per cent of cancer and AIDS patients in Ghana cannot be treated adequately with the current level of morphine supply. We call on Member States and civil-society organizations to partner with us to integrate effective pain relief and palliative care into public health systems in order to ensure access to controlled drugs for medical and scientific purposes while preventing diversion.

The Government of Ghana is committed to ensuring that people who are dependent on drugs are subjected to the public health system and not the criminal justice system. They need public health support, not criminal measures. It is important to integrate public health and human rights approaches to drug control. We have to ensure an increase in resource allocation for health- and human-rights-based policies in drug control.

In line with that approach, Ghana advocates the development of a system-wide policy on the protection of human rights in drug-related programming by the United Nations system Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking. We believe that this will naturally lead to the building upon, and operationalization of, existing United Nations human rights due diligence and policy.

It is our hope that this special session will build on current discussions on drug-control indicators under Sustainable Development Goal 3.5 and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. In that regard, we urge the United Nations Statistical Commission to develop new pro-development metrics to help prepare the next political declaration.

We also call for the establishment of a high-level independent expert commission, supported by the World Health Organization, to analyse the state of global access to controlled medicines and to advise on measures to improve it. The development of coherent United Nations system-wide guidance on the programming of treatment of drug use disorders for application across United Nations programming is also worthy of consideration at this session.

We would support the establishment of an appropriate forum to encourage Member States, international organizations, academia and civil society to share robust scientific evidence about the wide range of drug control criminal justice response policy interventions and their outcomes. That should inform the adoption of any new political declaration and plan of action in 2019.

Finally, this special session should establish an open working group on drug policy to prepare measurable global drug policy goals for adoption in 2019. We believe that the working group should be based in New York, work in the period leading up to 2019 and present its proposals to the General Assembly. The report of the working group should be replete with guidance on the protection of human rights in the war against drugs.

In conclusion, Ghana looks forward to continuing efforts to improve the quality and the depth of the dialogue that has been generated so that, in rebalancing international policy on drugs, greater emphasis is placed on health and human rights, including treatment, care and harm and risk reduction.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Kossi Baoumodom Amayi, Executive Secretary of the National Anti-Drug Commission of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Amayi (Togo) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to express my gratitude for this opportunity to share with the General Assembly the multifaceted actions taken by my country, Togo, in the fight against drugs. Although drugs and drug abuse have existed for centuries, I believe that all would agree that it has been only within the past 50 years that the international community has effectively and resolutely committed to combating that scourge through the adoption of a coordinated approach.

Unfortunately, Togo, like other countries on the West African coast, finds itself on the drug-trafficking route, in our case cocaine, from countries of South America en route to Europe. That situation has called for strong Government action. In that regard, Togo has ratified all United Nations conventions and treaties concerning the fight against drugs.

In 1996, aware of the danger that such trafficking represents, Togo established the National Anti-Drug Commission, which is an interministerial body responsible for anti-drug policy. A drug-control law was adopted in 1998. The establishment of the policy body was followed up by operational measures that translated into the etablishment of the Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering. Unfortunately, in the 1990s those measures were put to the test by a breakdown in the cooperation between Togo and its partners. Taking advantage of that vacuum in cooperation, criminal networks gradually took root in Togo. However, at no point in time did the Togolese Government give up the fight. For instance, in 2004, the vessel *Pitéa*, carrying about 400 kilograms of cocaine, was detained in Lomé.

Since 2005, thanks to Government action and international cooperation, there has been a renewed sense of energy in the fight. That made it possible in 2008 to dismantle the South American networks implanted in our country. That commitment to the fight against trafficking is a priority for our Government. For evidence of that, we can look to the seizure of drugs in various parts of our territory. However, small amounts of hard drugs have also been seized in recent years. That can be explained by the fact that traffickers are choosing other routes.

The death penalty has been abolished in Togo since June 2009. Although it existed before that date, the penalty was last applied in 1979. While it is true that repression alone cannot overcome the drug-trade phenomenon, the Togolese Government has been taking a variety of actions to reduce demand.

The treatment of addicts remains a health priority for Togo. An addiction treatment centre was established within the Campus University Hospital of Lomé and two other psychological medical centres for the treatment of addicts have also been established within our country. UNODC-trained actors carry out awareness-raising activities within various social strata in the country. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Kingdom of Norway and many other partners, whose cooperation has strengthened the demand-reduction activities in our country.

Undoubtedly, the world drug problem jeopardizes the efforts of our States and the international community with regard to sustainable development, political stability and the consolidation of democratic institutions. That is why Togo remains determined, at the regional and international levels, to combat the drug scourge. In that regard, I would stress my country's desire to see cooperation between the various actors strengthened in order to overcome the drug problem, which poses a serious threat to the health, safety and welfare of all humankind. Particular attention should be paid to the most vulnerable countries.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that my country fully supports the common position of the African Union and the recommendations of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Budiman (Indonesia): At the outset, let me congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of this very important meeting.

This special session on the world drug problem has just reached a milestone with the adoption of resolution S-30/1. Indonesia welcomes that adoption, which would not have been possible without the spirit of consensus and great flexibility that prevailed among the Member States involved in the negotiation process.

Seven years have passed since the adoption of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Yet, despite our vigorous efforts and collaboration, the world drug problem persists. In that regard, Indonesia recognizes the significance of this special session as an important high-level forum in the lead-up to 2019. In our view, this special session provides a unique opportunity for Member States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and experts to discuss progress and challenges in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. This special session and its resolution S-30/1 should, therefore, serve as an important step towards achieving the targets and objectives of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action in accordance with the three international drug-control conventions.

Bearing in mind the operational elements of the resolution, allow me to share some main points that reflect our national position on the world drug problem and our efforts to address and counter that scourge, with a view to achieving the goal of a society free of drug abuse.

First, Indonesia reiterates that the three international drug-control conventions constitute the cornerstone of the international drug-control system.

Secondly, demand-reduction measures remain an integral part of our national drug-control strategies. Indonesia continues to develop its strategy to improve its rehabilitation programmes, in particular by the establishment of additional rehabilitation centres, including the establishment of voluntary community-based centres. In that regard, our experience shows the importance of the active participation of families and communities in prevention efforts at all levels, and of eradication measures to counter the abuse of drugs and psychotropic substances.

Thirdly, the current state of drug trafficking continues to be a serious threat that requires extraordinary efforts. Drug-trafficking rings, with their sophisticated modi operandi, such as the increased prevalence of new psychoactive substances, or the use of the Internet, continue to spread in many parts of Indonesia, and have penetrated all levels of society, including the young generation. Money-laundering involving proceeds from drug trafficking is another major challenge. To tackle that serious crime, Indonesia has taken strict but appropriate law-enforcement measures to hold drug traffickers and drug-related criminals accountable for their crimes. For Indonesia, it is beyond dispute that illicit narcotic drugs pose a serious threat to human lives and adversely affect the health and the economic, social and political foundation of individuals, their families and society.

My delegation wishes to emphasize that every country has its own unique characteristics. What is applicable in one country should not be thought to be automatically applicable everywhere, and no one should generalize failure to deal with the drug abuse in his or her own territory as the failure of every country to tackle the world drug problem.

In our view, the transnational challenges posed by drug trafficking should also be addressed with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and in accordance with the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. In other words, each country has the sovereign right and responsibility to decide on the most appropriate approach to addressing the drug problem within its borders, taking into account the historical, political, economic, social and cultural contexts and norms of its society.

As no country can tackle drug crimes alone, international cooperation is important. In that regard, Indonesia fully subscribes to the common position of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. My delegation believes that in order to suppress and eliminate the scourge of drugs, a zero-tolerance approach is needed so as to provide people and communities in the region with a society free from drug abuse and its ill effects.

Fourthly, Indonesia attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In addressing the drug problem, we believe that access to health facilities, care and social services should be afforded to everyone in a non-discriminatory manner, taking into account the special needs of women and children. However, we are of the view that the promotion and protection of human rights should be addressed in a balanced manner.

It is important that respect for human rights should mean that the rights of individuals are protected, including protection from criminals who prey on vulnerable individuals. We therefore believe that the rights of the victims of drug-related offenses and their families should be considered as an important element in the formulation of global policy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago views the special session on the world drug problem as a timely and important avenue for further discussions on how to deal with the world drug problem in a comprehensive and sustainable manner, as well as on how to synchronize efforts at the national, regional and global levels aimed at tackling that international menace. For us, as a small island developing State plagued by illicit drug trafficking, illicit drug use and the related consequences, this moment for convening the special session is well-chosen.

In some quarters, it continues to be believed that robust punitive laws that seek to deter involvement in the illicit drug trade can reduce the world drug problem and its associated health and social harms. However, Trinidad and Tobago firmly believes that it is no longer possible to rely on strategies and policies focused on seizures, arrests and punishments to solve the severe and pernicious drug problem. We in Trinidad and Tobago therefore support the shift from such an archaic approach to a new one that adopts and focuses on a balanced, integrated and multidisciplinary approach in tackling the problem.

Furthermore, we submit that resources should be focused on reducing drug-related crime and, at the same time, on effectively addressing the harmful health-related, social and economic consequences of drug abuse and drug dependency, in which the victims of such abuse find themselves. Trinidad and Tobago also emphasizes the importance of the timely and reliable collection of data in order to accurately assess domestic realities and adopt the appropriate measures to address those problems. In that regard, we continue, in conformity with the international instruments relevant to the drug problem, to call upon our partners to continue to work with us in a cooperative manner, as envisioned by those international legal instruments.

Trinidad and Tobago also supports the implementation of a rigorous drug-monitoring information system, as well as the development of proactive strategies that would enable States to rapidly identify new threats and, at the same time, anticipate their potential implications for our societies. The national drug policy of Trinidad and Tobago and the operational plan for drug control seek to deal with the complex issue of drug control through a balanced and multipronged approach, in alignment with local, regional and global standards, which have been adapted to work in our domestic situation. As a country, we have long endorsed a people-centred approach to development, and that is also found in our strategies to tackle and eventually eradicate the pernicious drug problem.

The world drug problem constitutes a serious threat to public health and to the safety and well-being of all humankind. In recognition of the burden borne by societies resulting from this decades-old and, in some cases, centuries-old problem, including drug dependency, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has endorsed a public-health approach to drug control, which not only prevents drug use, but also reduces its negative impact on all of our citizens, including infants. At the same time, it is imperative that efforts undertaken at the national level be supported by an enabling international environment. We are of the view that this special session must seek to establish a framework that could result in the consolidation of the drug control environment, for which Trinidad and Tobago has been calling for some time.

Our national drug policy also promotes efforts aimed at enhancing alternative development programmes that facilitate inclusive opportunities for healthy and productive lives for those most vulnerable to involvement with drugs, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS and other at-risk groups. Moreover, we hold the view that alternative development must relate to the particularities of the countries that serve as transit points, such as Trinidad and Tobago, and as consumer markets, and that the approach must bring together initiatives contributing to the acceptance and adoption of healthier lifestyles, particularly among those most vulnerable to involvement with drugs.

Our drug-control programmes must also seek to empower individuals by providing them with opportunities and equipping them with life skills aimed at discouraging drug abuse and involvement in the pernicious drug trade. Trinidad and Tobago urges everyone gathered here today to adopt a broader view of alternative development in relation to drug control by placing greater emphasis on addressing the social and economic challenges that have given rise to and fuelled the international drug problem.

When law-enforcement and criminal justice systems are overburdened, the effectiveness of established policies is undermined. Trinidad and Tobago therefore advocates for a strengthened criminal-justice system that would embrace restorative-justice approaches and alternatives to incarceration, and that would be applied to drug trafficking, its related criminal activities and drug abuse. Its aim would be to alleviate the major challenges posed by such issues as the overpopulation of prisons, high detention rates for minor drug-related offences, significant delays in the criminal-justice system and insufficient rehabilitative or vocational training for persons awaiting trial or on remand.

States also face an increasing number of challenges in their efforts to ensure access to medicines essential for the successful operation of health-care systems, and to restrict access to controlled substances and limit illicit drug use. As a consequence, Trinidad and Tobago's national drug policy promotes a scientific approach to developing effective demand and supply reduction strategies. We also believe that close collaboration among the relevant agencies and departments at the national and global levels can be an effective mechanism for preventing the diversion of controlled substances, while at the same time ensuring that health-care facilities have adequate resources.

In conclusion, Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to have joined the consensus on the outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). However, we hope that future negotiations on outcome documents on such critical issues as this pernicious world drug problem will take place in New York, where all Member States, which are not all represented at other locations, can participate in significant numbers. Trinidad and Tobago remains, as is its custom, committed to continuing to work with all relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of well-targeted and flexible policies, which are pivotal to addressing, in a holistic manner, the security concerns and the socioeconomic impact of the illicit drug trade on our societies.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Marat Demeuov, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Demeuov (Republic of Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to welcome the participants in this special session and to wish everyone success in their work.

The issue of the drug threat and its impact on national and international security plays an important role on the international agenda. It is also the subject of our continual concern. We take that threat seriously, and we have taken determined measures nationally to combat drug trafficking. That is one of our main priorities in our internal and foreign policies. Our Kazakhstan 2030 strategy and a number of other State and related programmes also deal with the problem.

There is no doubt that the transnational and constantly changing nature of the threats posed by drugs require that we take coordinated and active joint measures. Kazakhstan expresses its commitment to participating in international and regional cooperation aimed at dealing with the drug threat. We highly commend and fully support the relevant initiatives and efforts of international and regional organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the anti-drug agencies of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and other organizations.

One of the mechanisms that can serve as an example of such cooperation is the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors, located in Almaty. We would like to express our gratitude to the United Nations, UNODC, donors and partner countries which have committed to assuming responsibility for providing technical and financial assistance to the Regional Centre. We are sure that the Regional Centre will make a contribution to UNODC efforts in the area of drug control. We are also actively working to establish a national agency for providing technical assistance.

The President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, in announcing his programme Manifesto: The World in the Twenty-First Century, again underlined the importance of developing a plan for a global strategic initiative for 2045. The plan would be aimed at forging a new development trend based on equitable access for all countries to infrastructure, resources and markets. That will have a significant impact on dealing with the illegal trade in drugs. We also support measures aimed at dealing with drug users in a humanitarian way. We are convinced of the need to take a very cautious and balanced approach in that area.

The growth in the production of drugs and the widespread distribution of new psychoactive substances have a significant impact on our efforts to reduce the production of opium and cannabis. We believe that the current situation requires an immediate response by the international community and the strengthening of interregional cooperation. Kazakhstan reaffirms its commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international conventions on drug control, and we express our readiness to continue our coordinated efforts aimed at combating the drug trade.

Kazakhstan, as an active participant in the preparations for this special session, firmly upholds the adoption of the outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", (resolution S-30/1, annex). We believe that it is a very important document in that it sets out a strategy for combating the illegal trade in narcotics. It is also an important step towards enhancing measures to combat that threat.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Dimby Noelson Hama, Secretary-General of the Interministerial Anti-Drug Commission of the Republic of Madagascar.

Mr. Hama (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): Madagascar aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the States of the African Union, by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the States members of the International Organization of la Francophonie (see A/S-30/PV.2).

The drug problem is not only a health-related issue but also impacts security. Although the Malagasy Government has limited resources, we have always shown our willingness to invest heavily in efforts to combat drugs. Indeed, following our accession to the three international drug-control conventions, we set up a national entity, namely, the Interministerial Commission for Coordinating the Fight against Drugs. A representative of our Government is entrusted with the task of defining, developing, managing and coordinating a national drug-control policy at the national, regional and international levels.

At the national level, the Malagasy State adopted Law No. 97-039 on drug control, psychotropic substances and precursors in Madagascar. The sad reality is that, during the past few years, while the political crisis in Madagascar was ongoing, the trafficking and consumption of drugs continued to grow in scope, and, unfortunately, we have seen more and more consumption. Cannabis is still the main drug of consumption, and it has been feeding the illicit trade in Madagascar.

Our country adheres to the Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, one of the major concerns of our State is to be able to locate all illicit narcotic crops in order to destroy them and replace them with viable crops, more specifically, substitute crops. In a bid to safeguard public health, which has come under threat from drugs, prevention activities have been stepped up. The current measures are based on the international norms established by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on the prevention of drug consumption.

With regard to related problems, our Government adopted a law on money-laundering, screening, confiscation and international cooperation in dealing with the proceeds of crime. We have been sharing financial intelligence so as to tackle money-laundering. In order to establish a policy of proximity, online training modules on counselling and treatment, involving participants from several regions of Madagascar, have been set up and others are being organized. In that context, an association is offering free counselling sessions in the ministries during 2016. Madagascar participated in the signing of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Let us look at some of the measures that we have adopted.

Everyone involved in the fight against drugs has been pooling their efforts to ensure a reduction in the supply and demand of drugs. Thanks to UNODC's financial and technical assistance, our Government has, over the past four successive years, been able to carry out capacity-building training programmes for most of our stakeholders working in the field. In 2015, a survey was conducted on drug prevalence in secondary schools in the urban commune of Antananarivo.

In 2004, we adopted a master drug-control plan. The plan needs to be updated, as the reality on the ground has changed a lot, especially given that several countries have inserted risk-reduction in their action plans against drugs, in view of drug use by injection, which can transmit HIV/AIDS and thereby threaten public health. One of our major concerns is also to upgrade the drug-control law and the law on precursors and psychotropic substances.

In conclusion, Madagascar is always ready to fight against drug trafficking. However, our socioeconomic conditions are not conducive to the Government's being able to effectively address that priority of priorities. Nevertheless, we are ready to do everything possible to serve the best interests of our country and to counter the world drug problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Eighteen years have passed since we came together here in New York and set out to achieve a drug-free world — by 2008 no less. Our collective failure is obvious. No country in the world is drug-free, and the level of illicit drug use has remained high over the past years. This special session is therefore an opportunity for reflection and for challenging our thinking from the past, which has clearly not delivered the intended results.

Let us remember our goals. The international drug-control framework was meant to address the health and welfare of humankind. Yet in practice, health has not been a priority: $100 billion are spent every year on global drug enforcement, mostly to reduce supply rather than demand. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *World Drug Report 2015* found that the unintended consequences of current drug policies have been to shift precious resources away from public health to law enforcement. The current regime facilitates very lucrative and violent criminal black markets, while criminalizing and marginalizing drug users. Those are not just minor side effects.

Women are disproportionately affected by those consequences. Their lack of economic opportunity increases their risk of being pushed into illegal drug-trading, especially in countries affected by political instability. Drug networks are also often involved in sex trafficking. Furthermore, domestic drug policies often lack a gender-sensitive approach, especially in the area of enforcement.

We are also greatly alarmed by the continued imposition of the death penalty for drug-related offences. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that the death penalty is currently practiced in 33 countries and territories, with some countries imposing mandatory death sentences. Drug-related crimes do not meet the threshold of the most serious crimes established under international law. Related executions are therefore in clear violation of article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We strongly urge the countries concerned to end that practice, which has no deterrent effect.

This session will be remembered as special only if we begin to change course. We must place health and welfare at the centre of our efforts, based on human rights and on scientific evidence. Particular efforts should go into prevention, harm reduction, access to treatment and the social reintegration of drug users. We must assist them in finding meaningful alternatives for their livelihoods and economic activity. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), we committed ourselves to strengthening the prevention of substance abuse and to combating all forms of organized crime. The Agenda is founded on human rights and human dignity. Our answer to the world drug problem must be as well.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fernando Araújo, Assistant Secretary of State and of Health of the Portuguese Republic.

Mr. Araújo (Portugal): Portugal associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the adoption of the outcome document of the special session, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", (resolution S-30/1, annex). It constitutes a step forward in the debate on how to address the world drug problem and provides a solid input towards the target date of 2019 and beyond.

Portugal believes that one of the major achievements of the special session process was the recognized need to rebalance drug policies towards a human rights and public-health-based approach. The Portuguese approach to drugs has been considered a model of best practices, owing to the fact that we recognize drug use as a health issue and drug dependence as a chronic and treatable multifactorial health disorder that needs to be treated, not punished. In Portugal, decriminalization created a legal framework for implementing policies to reduce the harm caused by drug consumption and to refer drug users to the most suitable care. Even if drug users are not in a position to quit using drugs, we believe that they still deserve the Government investment needed to improve their health and social condition.

Decriminalization is, therefore, part of a comprehensive drug-demand-reduction approach that includes prevention, treatment, harm reduction and social reintegration. The implementation of evidence-based harm-reduction measures is considered to be a key factor in our policy, as such measures protect both drug users and society as a whole, improving the health and well-being of drug users and their families. The focus on a risk- and harm-reduction approach is, therefore, a key principle that Portugal stands for, as such measures have proved their effectiveness and should be further promoted and implemented.

Portugal reiterates its commitment to the three major international drug-control conventions, which have, in our view, sufficient scope and flexibility for States to design and implement drug policies according to their own national priorities and specificities, based on solid scientific evidence and on the respect for human rights. In that regard, the Chair of the International Narcotics Control Board has stated on several occasions that the conventions do not require the criminalization of drug use and that the Portuguese model of decriminalization is in line with the conventions.

Portugal firmly believes that our efforts to address the world drug problem must incorporate a human rights perspective. In that regard, we deeply regret that the outcome document does not address the abolition of the death penalty. I would like to underline Portugal's unrelenting opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. We therefore call on all countries that retain capital punishment to establish an immediate official moratorium, with a view to its permanent abolition.

In conclusion, Portugal strongly believes that the international community must pursue its efforts to address all aspects of the drug problem. I would like to assure the President that my country will continue to contribute actively in that endeavour.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/32, of 19 November 2002, I now give the floor to the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Ms. Patricia Torsney (Inter-Parliamentary Union): Parliamentarians are among the first witnesses to the impacts of drug policy. They interact with their constituents, who fear that their children are at risk, who ask why treatment is unavailable, who require legal services to avoid prosecution, or who simply need someone to hear their concerns. Parliamentarians are involved directly in establishing the legal framework and regulations that govern drugs in their countries, and they pass budgets for health care, education and rehabilitation that help curb the effects of drugs.

In February, the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held a joint parliamentary hearing in preparation for this special session. The hearing built on discussions on drug issues at several IPU Assemblies, as policy repercussions were being felt all around the world. The hearing made it clear that drug addiction is not far removed from other addictions, such as to alcohol and tobacco; not all drugs are the same, nor do all drug users become addicted.

For those and many other reasons, parliamentarians believe the world's response to the drug problem must be compassionate and considerate. It must start by looking at drug use as a health issue, without stigma or discrimination. Although consensus was not reached on several agenda items, the hearing addressed many misunderstandings and set the stage for further political debate in national parliaments. Moreover, the hearing revealed a degree of common ground on four key points.

First, the three main international drug-control conventions provide a framework to guide policy in all countries, and countries should not try to go it alone.

Secondly, many countries are interpreting the conventions too narrowly, without considering their flexibility. Under the conventions, while the production, sale and use of drugs must remain illegal, punishment for lawbreakers does not require imprisonment. Many parliamentarians were not aware of that.

Thirdly, all countries should focus more on tackling the root causes of drug use, not just their effects. If people are helped out of poverty, if health care and education are available and institutions are more transparent, and if their representatives proactively implement the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the drivers of the drug problem will be undercut.

Fourthly, more attention must be paid to the unintended consequences of the so-called war on drugs, including the expansion of lucrative drug markets and its associated criminality. Many participants questioned the wisdom of investing huge resources in law enforcement at the expense of prevention and treatment, and expressed concern for the unrelenting focus on small producers and users, as opposed to the large cartels, which are responsible for the worst crimes. As a member of parliament noted, the war on drugs has become a war on the poor. That is one unintended consequence that the anti-poverty, people-centred SDGs call on us to remedy urgently.

Drug policies must respect human rights, including the right of indigenous people to their traditional livelihoods, the right of drug users to treatment and, of course, the most sacrosanct right of all — the right to life. Several participants spoke strongly against the use of the death penalty for drug-related crimes.

The parliamentary hearing brought to light the need for more coherent national policies to replace the patchwork of legislation and measures that many countries have adopted over the years. All countries should perform a comprehensive review of their drug problem, and on that basis design an integrated, balanced strategy in consultation with all concerned individuals and organizations. That issue must remain high on the agenda globally and nationally, especially for parliamentarians. While many are satisfied with the existing legal frameworks and with the general response to the problem so far, many others are not. We must listen carefully to the growing concern that the global response to the drug problem is not working. We must design policies based on the facts as they are, rather than on ideology or an idealized picture of the world.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Barra (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I thank the President for giving me the opportunity to address the General Assembly on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the world's largest humanitarian network, comprising 190 member National Societies and working through 70 million community-based volunteers. Our mission is to prevent or mitigate human suffering in all its forms. There is no doubt that substance abuse is one of the major causes of suffering, as Professor Claude Olievenstein said in his book *Il n'y a pas de drogués heureux*. That is why the national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have for many decades raised their voices about the negative consequences of drug consumption, starting at the Regional Conference for Asia in Bangkok in 1922, at a time of opium abuse, and continuing to the present day.

We were among the first international organizations to call for human, evidence-based harm-reduction policies for drug users, a policy practiced today through many national societies around the world working in partnership with the public authorities. We have been very concerned about the humanitarian consequences of approaches to drug use that rely exclusively on the prosecution and punishment of addicted persons while neglecting support, care and treatment. Public-health research on that issue is very clear. A more human approach simply works much better to prevent the worst consequences of drug use.

As a medical doctor who has met about 40,000 drug users in the institution I created in 1976, the Italian Red Cross/Villa Maraini Foundation in Rome, I can personally attest to the fact that repressive attitudes towards drug users are not in the public interest and that we should work to gain access to hard-to-reach populations that live in the shadows. "Meet and treat" should be our slogan.

People dependent on drugs continue to be among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the world. Yet in too many instances, instead of being met with understanding and being provided with equitable access to treatment and care, drug users remain excluded from society. They face social stigma, and they are punished and imprisoned rather than treated. In that regard, we would like to underline the particular vulnerability of women and young people. It is in the interest of each of us to accept and extend a supportive hand towards people using drugs, instead of rejecting them. Addressing their humanitarian needs is an important step leading to empowerment and recovery. Empowerment is always therapeutic. Such an approach is not impossible if there is real political will. We need a different approach in which we emphasize the health challenges and needs of drug users.

Today, we have a unique opportunity to call for policies that safeguard equitable access to health care. We therefore urge Governments to implement effective, people-centred and inclusive measures to reduce health risks. As was well said yesterday by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (see A/S-30/PV.1), the scientific evidence is very clear, and we need to take it into account when designing our policies. For their part, through the large network of volunteers present in hard-to-reach communities, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide are well placed to increase their partnership with local authorities, other stakeholders at the community level, and civil-society organizations in such a way as to bridge the existing gap between formal health institutions and the most marginalized populations and to truly ensure that no one is left behind.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations

A/S-30/PV.4

General Assembly

Official Records

Thirtieth special session

4th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 20 April 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft .... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Urmas Reinsalu, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Estonia.

Mr. Reinsalu (Estonia): We should have no illusions. The social problem that drugs present is growing, not decreasing. Our shared approach should react robustly to the modern trends around this threat. We should focus more on the sale and trafficking of drugs over the Internet and on the rise of new psychoactive substances. Global drug policy should send a clear and consistent signal that profiting from drug use is against the core principles of human dignity. The fact that drugs are spreading is no reason to support the notion that drugs should be a normal and accepted part of the future of humankind. Our moral stand should be that drugs are not a normal aspect of individual liberty and choice. Far from it — we must understand their risks and dangers and see them as a fast route to the total destruction of personal will. I believe that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that we adopted yesterday is an important step forward in that regard.

Estonia fully aligns itself with the common European Union position on this issue. At the United Nations we have focused on supporting human rights, and I would therefore like to express my regret about our failure to move forward on the abolition of the death penalty and other inhumane punishments for drug offences.

Estonia is on one of Europe's drug-trafficking routes. In 2014, my Government adopted a new drug-prevention policy. To be honest, the problems we face are extensive and complex. We have way too many injecting drug users and one of the highest rates of drug-overdose deaths in Europe. We have reason to be angry about that situation and to take a firm and honest policy stance on it.

Our first priority is prevention, and in recent years the Government has therefore dramatically increased its investment in that. We focus on evidence-based measures aimed at children, families and schools, and we must continue to work on such prevention. The second pillar of our approach is harm reduction. We have launched programmes for needle exchange, methadone substitution treatment, naloxone programmes and counselling services. We believe that reducing harm benefits all of us and damages no one. The third pillar is treatment. We have a long way to go in that regard. We have changed our laws to provide alternatives to incarceration and treatment for those who need it, and we are now working to ensure that there are enough quality treatment services all over the country.

Law enforcement also has an important role to play in our drug policy. The Government expects the police to focus on organized crime and on reducing the availability of the most dangerous types of drugs. The State should provide help when it is needed and mete out harsh punishment when it is justified. Our approach in

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the future will be smart about measures, proportionate towards users and tough on organizers.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Paiboon Koomchaya, Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Mr. Koomchaya (Thailand) (*spoke in Thai; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, Thailand would like to thank the General Assembly for convening this special session on the world drug problem, which recognizes the importance of international cooperation in addressing that global issue.

We commend the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central United Nations policymaking body for international drug control. We support the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in coordinating and integrating international cooperation to ensure the effective implementation of international drug-control policy, and of the International Narcotics Control Board in monitoring implementation of the three international drug conventions.

Thailand also welcomes our adoption yesterday of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which was the subject of intensive consultations among Member States, including Thailand. We reiterate our commitment to ensuring the effective implementation of the three drug-control conventions. We adhere to a balanced approach that includes reducing both demand and supply.

Thailand aligns itself with the position of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on this issue. We do not agree with legalizing illicit drugs, since there are other measures available, or with decriminalizing serious offences. At the same time, we believe that drug users should receive treatment and rehabilitation, not incarceration, and we promote implementation of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, the Bangkok Rules.

Thailand promotes the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, and we recognize the nexus between alternative development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Integrating alternative development programmes into national development plans and strategies should therefore be encouraged. Alternative development can also be applicable in urban settings and can help address socioeconomic problems.

The Royal Thai Government reaffirms its unwavering determination and commitment to countering the drug problem in the Golden Triangle, which is one of the world's largest sources of illicit drug production and affects other regions. The problem of the illicit trafficking of precursor chemicals in the Golden Triangle is one of my priorities. I urge the countries of origin to focus on the problem and work together to solve it. We have established joint cooperation in the greater Mekong subregion under our Safe Mekong Operation Plan, expediting subregional, national and operational action plans to counter the illicit trafficking of drugs and their precursors. The Safe Mekong Operation has yielded positive results, and I am grateful to the Governments of China, Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Cambodia for their strong commitment to and support for it. I also thank the Government of Australia and the UNODC for their continued cooperation and support in that regard.

Lastly, Thailand is ready to work with the international community to mitigate the risk posed by the world drug problem. Such efforts are based on the principle of common and shared responsibility and partnerships. I would be more than happy to see potential donor countries and international organizations engage with the countries of South-East Asia in the fight against the world drug problem.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Juras Požela, Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania.

Mr. Požela (Lithuania): It is a pleasure to join you, Mr. President, and the other speakers here today. Lithuania considers this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem an important opportunity for the international community to review what has been achieved and assess what remains to be done in order to effectively address the world drug problem. Lithuania, together with all the European Union (EU) member States, has therefore been extensively engaged in the preparatory process for the special session, providing contributions and defining our common position.

We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered previously on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

While recognizing the progress that has been made towards solving the world drug problem, Lithuania regrets the fact that it remains a major challenge for the international community and will continue to require increased and effective bilateral, regional and international cooperation, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. We also believe that we must ensure effective cooperation among all the relevant United Nations entities if we are to develop an effective drug policy oriented towards human rights and public health and based on scientific evidence and best practices.

Drug use is a public-health issue. There is a need for improved understanding of addiction to go with the growing recognition that it is a chronic but treatable multi-factor health disorder, and that is why we should base our drug policies on a balanced approach focused on human rights and public health. We must put people first when developing responses. We also have to ensure that a broad range of drug-demand-reduction services can provide approaches that serve vulnerable groups and are differentiated, based on scientific evidence, so that they can best respond to the varying needs of those groups.

We totally agree with the importance of ensuring better implementation of the provisions of the existing drug-control treaties and political declarations and of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, resulting in a balanced, comprehensive and integrated approach in which health and welfare are at the core of drug-control policy, human rights are promoted and the principle of proportionality is applied. Lithuania is convinced that success depends on the political will and ability of States to implement evidence-based policies and practices in line with the conventions. Under the drug-control conventions, States parties are committed to ensuring that access to controlled narcotic and psychotropic substances for the relief of pain and suffering is not unduly restricted, while recognizing the need to prevent abuse, misuse and diversion.

Lithuania strongly believes that human rights are an integral part of any response to the drug problem. We therefore believe that using the death penalty for drug-related offences is contrary to international law and the spirit of the United Nations drug-control conventions. Like all the European Union member States, Lithuania regrets that prohibition of the death penalty for drug-related offences has so far been excluded from the special session's outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), despite continued calls from the EU and several States, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations.

We are now facing numerous new challenges, such as new psychoactive substances, new trends in illicit production and trafficking routes. We are also seeing the rapid evolution of a new market, the sale and purchase of drugs through the Internet. The misuse of legal medicines is spreading in many countries. In our view, such challenges to a solution to the world drug problem require a cooperative response from all stakeholders, at the national, regional and international levels. Given the strong links between supply and demand, it is important that the justice and health sectors collaborate on the issues.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of engaging civil society and the scientific community in the development, implementation and evaluation of drug demand-reduction policies, at both the national and international levels. At this special session, Lithuania is proud to be officially represented by several representatives of non-governmental organizations participating as part of the Lithuanian delegation.

This special session is a significant opportunity for all of us to develop and implement science- and evidence-based drug policies, promoting evidence-based prevention, public health interventions — including treatment and risk- and harm-reduction measures — and proportionate sentencing, as well as to strengthen operational cooperation against organized crime. The research evidence shows clearly that harm-reduction approaches are beneficial to health, because they prevent overdoses and the transmission of diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B and C. They are also highly effective for reducing criminality rates in communities. Lithuania has therefore been taking a leading role in spreading knowledge and expertise on modern harm reduction and biological, psychological and social treatment approaches for addicts and families affected across the region.

The road to the thirtieth special session has been a long one, and the hard work is not over. We all are committed to working to achieve our shared objectives in addressing the world drug problem through strengthened national, regional and international cooperation. We in Lithuania intend to carefully study the new ideas that have been incorporated into the outcome document and consider the conclusions we can draw nationally and the changes we should introduce into our drug-control policies.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sohn Mungi, Minister of Food and Drug Safety of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sohn Mungi (Republic of Korea): It is a great honour for me to address this special session, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone here for making the event possible.

The international community has been deeply committed to countering the world drug problem, starting with the adoption in 2009 of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and meaningful progress has been made since then. The scope of discussions has expanded and has extended beyond simply focusing on controlling perpetrators. The new approach is more proactive and balanced, reaching out to vulnerable members of society such as women and children and promoting education and social welfare.

Despite such advances and the continued efforts of the United Nations and the international community, we are constantly facing new challenges and threats. For example, illegal drug trafficking through the Internet is widespread and on the rise. Narcotics prescribed for medical use are being abused, and new psychotropic substances are proliferating. In particular, drug trafficking on the Internet has soared. The cross-border nature of Internet drug trafficking makes it extremely difficult for any one country to address the problem unilaterally. It is my great hope that this special session can serve as an opportunity to discuss and make progress towards a specific cooperation scheme aimed at combating such traffic.

As for the abuse of medical narcotics, it is important for us to prevent it while at the same time supporting their proper use. To that end, we have developed a system in Korea, based on information technology infrastructure, designed to monitor the medical use of narcotics from start to finish. The system enables us to track permitted uses of such drugs from manufacturing to distribution and even to the prescription level. We look forward to sharing our experience and knowledge, as well as providing technical assistance, in that regard.

Korea is more committed than ever to assisting the international community in effectively addressing the world drug problem. We will continue to work closely with the international community as a reliable partner on our journey towards sustainable development, peace and humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Makei (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): In 2009, with the adoption of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, we marked the transition to a more coordinated strategic approach to combating that problem against a backdrop of increasingly interdependent global processes. We value the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control Board aimed at enhancing international cooperation on this issue.

Belarus, for its part, is a party to all three anti-drug conventions, and is fully committed to the principles of the 2009 Political Declaration. We have created a robust institutional base enabling us to conduct a targeted and uncompromising fight against the illicit trade in drugs and psychotropic substances. In the past few years we have adopted additional measures that have enabled us to ban for all practical purposes the distribution of new psychoactive drugs.

Nonetheless, however effective State measures may be, one of the greatest obstacles to the spread of drugs may be their complete rejection by society, and in order to achieve that we have to create corresponding attitudes. We therefore believe that we must anchor the fight against the spread of drugs by supporting the family, as the basic social institution and one that plays a vital part in bringing up and educating children and young people.

Despite the limited amount of progress that has been made at the global level in combating illicit drug trafficking, the problem has, unfortunately, been contained rather than solved. In that regard, I would like to focus on two points. First, drugs are closely interlinked with other transnational threats such as terrorism, human trafficking and money laundering. It is therefore clear that achieving success against any one of those challenges depends on making overall progress in addressing all of them. We are confident that we can find a solution to that difficult task, and we have a good tool for it in the form of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

Secondly, we are concerned about the recent accelerating trend in the appearance of new psychoactive substances that are not prohibited by the founding conventions but whose consumption produces effects as powerful as those of traditional drugs. In that regard, I would like to note the comprehensive resolution on the issue initiated by Australia, Belarus and the United States of America and adopted at the recent fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. I firmly believe that implementing the resolution will help us to find effective ways of countering the phenomenon of new psychoactive substances.

In conclusion, I hope that our meeting will give new impetus to the efforts to counter the world drug problem.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Jesús Gracia Aldaz, Vice-Minister for International Cooperation and Iberoamerica of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Aldaz (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before laying out Spain's position on the issue we are here to discuss, I would like to express our full agreement with the statement delivered yesterday by Mr. Mimica on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

I would like to begin by emphasizing the Spanish Government's firm belief in the full validity and usefulness of the three United Nations drug-control conventions, both in safeguarding the health and welfare of our peoples and in establishing an effective regime concerning the use of narcotics and psychotropic substances solely for medical and scientific purposes. We see the conventions as constituting an international legal framework that when interpreted with reasonable flexibility can continue to play the key role in the issue of drugs that the international community has assigned to it.

Based on our assessment of these international standards and provisions, Spain advocates an approach balanced between reducing both the supply of drugs and the demand for them, with the international cooperative efforts aimed at achieving that goal being conducted on a basis of common and shared responsibility between producing, transit and consumer countries.

Based on all of this, I also believe that we must strengthen the provisions of the three basic conventions by interpreting them in the light of other United Nations instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 3, which provides for strengthening the prevention of substance use, including drug abuse and the treatment of health problems associated with tobacco use.

In remaining consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and as the person responsible for my country's cooperation in the international arena, I am pleased to note that Spain is fully committed to the Goals and is developing cooperation programmes with other multilateral and national partners, such as the Cooperation Programme between Latin America and the European Union on Drug Policies, that help to promote development to provide alternatives to those affected by the cultivation of cannabis, cocaine or opium poppies. We know that poverty and the lack of moral values and hope among young people greatly contribute to sustaining and strengthening drug trafficking.

I wish to underscore that in Spain, we attach great importance to the search for alternative development policies for populations that produce precursors to narcotics. Such development must go beyond the mere eradication of crops. However, authentic, in-depth and sustainable development requires strengthened legal and institutional mechanisms of the rule of law. Only through the practices of good governance will corruption — promoted by drug-trafficking networks as a way of perverting democracy and impoverishing people so as to better subjugate them to their interests — be eradicated. Furthermore, it is our conviction that, as with every development policy, women also play a primary role in that regard, being as they are in many instances the core of the family and the ones who bear the responsibility for caring for children exposed to the harmful effects of drug use.

That observation brings me back to my earlier reference to the link between the conventions of the United Nations and the principles of human rights. Spain, which unconditionally defends the abolition of the death penalty, believes that policies to combat drug trafficking must be subject to stricter respect for human rights and that in all cases, as stated in the final outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex), which has brought us together, penalties for drug trafficking must in all cases be proportionate to the crimes committed. In that vein and in line with the statement and explanation of position on the death penalty made on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1), I regret that the final outcome document does not contain a reference to the death penalty. Likewise, I call again on countries that still apply the death penalty for drug-related crimes to consider a moratorium on its use as a way to advance its abolition.

Under the rubric of human rights I also include public- health policies, which must provide comprehensive assistance aimed at prevention, treatment and reducing the damage caused by drug use or related illnesses — a situation paralleled by the AIDS pandemic and its remediation. In the 1980s and 1990s, Spain played a pioneering role in taking action aimed at harm reduction, thanks to which we succeeded in overcoming the scourge of heroin that was then afflicting us. In the light of that experience, Spain supports such measures, even in unusual circumstances that may occur in other countries, such as prison policies that include not only alternative prison sentences served outside of prison, but also the treatment of prison inmates addicted to drugs in order to effect their full rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

On the other hand, we must not ignore the perverse connections between drug networks and terrorist organizations in seeking their mutual benefit. Other undesirable effects of drug trafficking are the corruption of rule-of-law institutions and money-laundering, which impoverish us all. Spain is waging an uncompromising struggle in those areas through effective action taken by its judicial organs and specialized police forces.

I conclude by recalling that in the past my country, like many others, suffered the terrible scourge of drug trafficking. Fortunately, Spain's various Governments and society have understood that the suppression of organized criminal gangs had to be at all times compatible with the utmost respect for the law and the principles of the rule of law, and that drug users must not be penalized for their suffering, which is a disease and, as such, must be treated by social, psychological and medical means, and in no circumstances punished with imprisonment.

Based on those assumptions, we are cooperating with numerous multilateral and national actors and stand ready to share our experience and the human and technical resources at our disposal in this struggle, to which the international community is committed within the framework of the conventions of the United Nations, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and with other specialized agencies of the Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Gerry Chanda, Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. Chanda (Zambia): At the outset, allow me to join others who have spoken before me to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you have steered the deliberations of this special session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Thailand earlier on behalf of the Group of Seven and of Uganda on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/S-30/PV.2). We are also in agreement with the statement made by the representative of the People's Republic of China (see A/S-30/PV.1).

The Government of the Republic of Zambia recognizes the leading role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) as the primary policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters, as stipulated in CND resolution 58/8. In that regard, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the informative report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its preparatory work for this special session on the world drug problem (see A/S-30/4).

Drug trafficking and abuse continue to pose serious social, health, security and economic costs to communities throughout the world, despite the increasing efforts of the global community to tackle the production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs. Zambia has not been spared the adverse effects of that global scourge, as the abuse and trafficking of illicit drugs continue to ravage families and communities as a whole. To that effect, I wish to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation for the global efforts aimed at controlling the consumption and trafficking of illicit drugs.

While Zambia was previously used as a mere transit point for illicit drugs, trends have changed and the country is now a net consumer of drugs such as cocaine and heroin. The consumption of cocaine and other hard drugs is on the rise. As a result, the Zambian Government, through its Drug Enforcement Commission, has continued to implement demand-reduction programmes through education and the sensitization of citizens on the dangers of illicit drugs, counselling and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug-dependent persons.

In order to promote the early prevention of drug use among young people, the Government of the Republic of Zambia has incorporated issues relating to drugs and money-laundering in school curriculums from the primary- to secondary-school levels, including the development and production of supplementary readers on illicit drugs and money-laundering. In addition, my Government has initiated a youth programme to fund those whose aim is to empower young people by helping them to establish their own businesses and thereby refrain from indulging in illicit drugs such as cocaine.

Furthermore, the Zambian Government has continued to undertake a regular review of drug-control legislation in order to address the emerging challenges, threats and realities, which will provide an integrated, balanced strategy in combating illicit drugs. In order to strengthen the fight against money-laundering and other organized transnational crimes, Zambia has also established, under the Drug Enforcement Commission, an Anti-Money-Laundering Investigations Unit that investigates all money-laundering-related offences.

The Zambian Government recognizes the three international drug conventions and related protocols as the cornerstones for effective international drug control and prevention measures and underscores the importance of achieving the goals and targets outlined in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We reaffirm that those international instruments are sufficient in providing the required guidance and appropriate approaches in curbing the world drug problem. While we appreciate that combating the world drug problem requires a balanced and integrated approach, and calls for the decriminalization and legalization of illicit drugs, such as cannabis, such actions in our view are against the spirit of the three international drug conventions.

I wish to seize this opportunity to welcome the outcome document of this session (resolution S-30/1, annex) and to note with satisfaction the special attention given by the document to human rights, youth, women, children and vulnerable communities. We could not agree more with the recommendations of the document, particularly on the need to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of policymakers in order to ensure that national policies fully respect human rights and protect the health and well-being of societies and communities as a whole.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the world drug problem remains a major challenge to the international community and requires effective and increased bilateral and multilateral cooperation, based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, to effectively deal with all aspects of the scourge. I further wish to reaffirm Zambia's commitment to fostering regional and international cooperation through the exchange of information, expertise and best practices on drug prevention and treatment mechanisms.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Marek Tombarkiewicz, Vice-Minister of Health of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Tombarkiewicz (Poland): The Republic of Poland fully supports the priorities of the drug-prevention policy formulated in the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) on behalf of the EU member States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

Poland acknowledges the opportunities which the document prepared at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna (see A/S-30/4) and this special session have created for the international community interested in an effective, human rights- and evidence-based drug policy. Poland also appreciates the fact that the majority of the provisions proposed in resolution S-30/1, aimed at improving the effectiveness of drug-prevention policies, promotes actions based on a realistic assessment of global and regional potential; guarantees respect for cultural, social and economic diversity; and takes into account the need to cooperate and to coordinate actions taken by supranational institutions and the international community.

Poland fully agrees that there is a need to base the principles of the drug-prevention policy on solutions going beyond the narrowly understood subject of controlled substances. Those principles should be viewed in the context of human rights and should balance the needs of public health and combating crime, participation by representatives from science and civil society in the process of analysis, and building strategies and action plans on active monitoring, risk assessment, scientific research and good practices. We express our strong conviction that, in the near future, it will be possible to discuss at the international level the issues of the abolition of the death penalty or the availability of harm-reduction programmes for various groups of recipients, implemented within the framework of prevention, treatment and reintegration measures.

In this statement, we would like to highlight the challenges faced by drug policies that we consider to be of particular importance. We believe that a drug policy should be part of a broadly understood social policy built on scientific, ethical and legal foundations that are as free as possible of ideological or political interference. A drug-prevention policy should also encompass broad understanding of addiction issues and involve institutions that generally deal with health, social policy and safety for citizens, not those exclusively specializing in anti-drug activities. We also believe, in the context of the processes of increasing globalization, that the need for cooperation and coordinated actions is even greater.

Poland attaches special attention to new psychoactive substances. We consider that issue to be one of the greatest challenges to public health and safety in the years to come. We also believe that, in order to ensure an effective response to the cross-border nature and global reach of new psychoactive substances, we need systematic and structured cooperation and the coordination of actions at the United Nations level. The fight against the manufacturers of new psychoactive substances rarely yields the expected results, and the experience of many countries and international institutions in countering them teaches us that the techniques and programmes that have been in place for many years are ineffective, due to their passive-reactive nature and their application of extensive procedures.

It is therefore crucial to invest in public education and prevention. Developing individual and corporate responsibility for using mind-altering substances would be impossible without strengthening cooperation and coordinating actions with regional and local authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Therefore, we believe that we should seek to reconcile the two trends, without losing sight of the international context, to actively develop the subsidiarity principle and invest in developing local drug-policy standards, which, being closest to the citizens themselves, have the best chance for a quick and effective response to changing drug scenes and societal needs.

An example of such an approach is elaborated in the Warsaw Declaration of the 2016 second International Urban Drug Policies Conference, which highlights the importance of and need to develop and coordinate urban addiction prevention programmes. Poland also believes that effectively reducing and eliminating the problems generated by addiction in the contemporary world would be virtually impossible without the involvement of all key players, including representatives of the international community, international institutions, national political authorities and representatives of the NGOs.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Le Quy Vuong, Deputy Minister of Public Security of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mr. Quy Vuong (Viet Nam) (*spoke in Vietnamese; English text provided by the delegation*): Viet Nam would like to welcome the timely convening of this special session on the world drug problem in 2016. Viet Nam deeply appreciates the adoption of resolution S-30/1 and strongly believes that this comprehensive document serves as an important milestone in reiterating the determination of Member States and the United Nations system to cope with the world drug problem.

Fully aware of the complexity and serious consequences of drugs on human health, society and development, in recent years the Government of Viet Nam has actively implemented comprehensive and balanced policies and measures to prevent drug-related threats. Viet Nam has gradually updated its legal system and developed long-, mid- and short-term strategies and programmes on drug control in line with the three United Nations conventions. A law on drug prevention and control was promulgated in 2000 and further amended in 2008. In addition, a national strategy on drug control to 2020 and vision towards 2030 was issued in 2011. In order to ensure effective multisectoral coordination on drug control, a national committee on drug control was officially established in 2000. In 2013, the National Assembly adopted the new Constitution, with a separate chapter on human rights.

Viet Nam is of the view that the current global drug-control framework stipulated under the three conventions should remain the cornerstone of the global drug-control system. Viet Nam shares the long-term vision of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries based on a "say no to drugs" policy and striving for a world free of drugs. Drug-control solutions should be balanced among supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction through law enforcement and socioeconomic measures to eliminate the root causes of the drug problem, as well as enhanced international cooperation in drug control.

Viet Nam attaches importance to such preventive measures as communication and education in raising awareness and promoting consensus to mobilize the active participation of the entire society in drug-control programmes and activities. Apart from that, Viet Nam has improved its drug-control agency system from the central to the provincial levels; strengthened the investigation and prosecution of drug-related crimes; integrated alternative development with socioeconomic and poverty-reduction programmes; and mobilized resources for drug control. With a humane spirit, the Government of Viet Nam has provided a wide range of drug treatment and drug-related support services based on diverse treatment models, including consultation services, harm-reduction measures and support for the reintegration of drug users.

Notwithstanding its positive achievements, Viet Nam still faces many challenges. First, Viet Nam is located in a region of increasingly complex drug-related crime. Secondly, an increasing number of new drugs and psychotropic substances are being abused, which requires the necessary technology and experience to effectively control. Thirdly, we are also short of resources to support drug treatment for and the reintegration of drug users. In order to overcome those challenges, Viet Nam wishes to receive generous and effective support and cooperation from its partners and United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

For its part, Viet Nam would like to reconfirm its highest commitment to cooperate closely with the international community, especially with ASEAN, in the global struggle against drugs.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Evika Siliņa, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia.

Ms. Siliņa (Latvia): It is an honour to be here today. On behalf of the Republic of Latvia, let me thank the General Assembly Special Session Board for its efforts and all of the stakeholders for providing their input into the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) and the preparatory process.

Latvia fully aligns itself with the European Union (EU) position and appreciates the inclusion of several EU proposals in the outcome document.

Latvia is a devoted supporter of a balanced and effective drug policy based on scientific evidence and oriented towards human rights and public health. We maintain our commitment to the United Nations drug-control conventions, which comprise the cornerstone of the response to the world drug problem. We believe that there is sufficient flexibility within the provisions of the Conventions to accommodate a diversity of measures in addressing the international drug problem in accordance with national and regional circumstances.

The best approach should be tailored to national specificities, because each nation's particular needs are unique and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. An essential principle for Latvia is respect for fundamental rights. In that regard, we oppose the death penalty in all circumstances, without exception. We call upon States that still maintain the death penalty to establish a moratorium on executions as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty. Latvia believes that the principle of proportionality must be applicable to all drug-related offences. For persons having committed minor, non-violent drug-related offences, alternatives to imprisonment should be applied.

Latvia recognizes the importance of access to risk- and harm-reduction measures. An effective drug policy should include drug demand reduction, including prevention, treatment and harm reduction, as well as supply reduction, including combating drug-related crime, actions against drug trafficking and international cooperation. Latvia remains an active advocate of strengthened international cooperation at the regional and global levels to counter drug trafficking and its links with corruption, terrorism and other forms of organized crime. We welcome any rational initiative targeted to strengthen comprehensive practical cross-border cooperation.

We are addressing the new challenges and growing threats, such as new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet for drug trafficking. We already have made progress in Latvia by implementing the generic system of scheduling new psychoactive substances, based on the European early-warning system. For increased efficiency, we have also implemented a temporary ban.

The new psychoactive substances are a cross-border issue. It would be addressed even more successfully if effective complex solutions could get implemented globally. We do not have to choose one single best approach. We should combine the best elements of different evidence-based approaches to find a solution and focus on how to merge a sound public-health approach with an effective law enforcement policy, in compliance with universal human rights.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Andrea Orlando, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Orlando (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1), we would also like to make a few remarks in our national capacity.

Addressing the world drug problem is one of the great global challenges of our times. Since the entry into force of the drug conventions and the adoption of the Political Declaration in 2009, we have gained experience and new challenges have emerged. We therefore need to adjust our domestic and international policies by strengthening projects that have proved to be effective and modifying those that have not, in light of the Sustainable Development Goals. I will provide a serious summary of the cost and benefits of the policies sustained until now without ideological conditions.

This special session is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the ultimate goal of the drug conventions: the health and welfare of humankind. We should make the best use of the conventions' flexibility so as to implement them in a more balanced, humane and effective way, ensuring that our drug policies fully respect human rights and are truly health-oriented.

The international community must fully recognize drug use as a health issue and drug addiction as a chronic and treatable multifactorial health disorder that should be treated, not punished. Our approach should be pragmatic rather than ideological — a results-oriented approach that encourages States to promote public policies motivated by the criterion of effectiveness rather than demagoguery. The human person must be the centre of domestic drug policies. We must guarantee access to the full range of measures, including prevention, treatment, risk and harm reduction, rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration, with special attention to women, youth, vulnerable groups and underserved populations, as well as those in prison settings.

Prevention is a key investment for society as a whole, and families and schools play a crucial role in this regard. HIV/AIDS is still a huge problem among people who use and inject drugs. Risk and harm- reduction approaches have proved to be effective. About three quarters of the global population does not have access to proper pain-relief treatment. This is one of the main shortcomings of the international drug control system, and it needs to be urgently addressed.

We must make sure that domestic criminal justice systems fully reflect the principle of proportionality enshrined in the conventions. Italian law provides a list of alternatives to detention for minor cases and ensures access to health-care services, including for those in prison. Italy decriminalized the use of drugs for personal consumption many years ago. In January 2016, we also decriminalized some violations related to the growing of cannabis for medical purposes.

We are engaged in countering drug trafficking and its many links to other serious crimes, including corruption and terrorism. We encourage all Member States to further promote the use of the tools provided for by the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols to strengthen international judicial and law enforcement cooperation.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) requires renewed efforts to tackle the socioeconomic roots of the world drug problem in close cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders. Strong cooperation with the scientific community, civil society and the private sector is crucial to the drafting, implementation, monitoring and assessment of drug policies. We encourage all relevant international organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, to step up their cooperation with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Italy firmly opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related crimes, and we regret that Member States failed to address this crucial issue in the outcome document (see resolution S-30/1, annex). We urge all countries that still have capital punishment for such crimes to adopt an immediate moratorium as a first step toward its final abolition.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ken Wyatt, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care of Australia.

Mr. Wyatt (Australia): This special session on the world drug problem is an important occasion for the world community in our ongoing efforts to reduce the illicit demand for and supply of controlled drugs. Australia supports the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of the 2016 special session, which is consistent with our own balanced and evidence-based approach to illicit drug policy.

At the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Australia was pleased to sponsor resolution 59/11, fostering international collaboration on alternative controls to scheduling emerging synthetic drugs and precursor chemical movements. Over the past year Australia has significantly expanded its national response to these types of drugs, particularly the methamphetamine known in Australia as "ice". A Government-appointed task force comprised of eminent health and law-enforcement experts advised we cannot arrest our way out of the problems caused by illicit drug use. As a result of the task force findings, we are now putting more focus on reducing the demand for and supply of "ice" and the associated harms to individuals and communities.

A key part of developing our response to this drug was extensive consultation with stakeholders, including civil society and young Australians. This has long been a part of our approach to responding to drug issues, and we firmly believe this is critical to an effective, humane response in any setting, including our international forums. In order to further enhance international efforts to combat the illicit flow of synthetic drugs, I am pleased to announce that Australia has pledged an additional $100,000 to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the Global SMART Programme, which is helping many countries improve their capacity to gather, analyse and report information on synthetic drugs.

Another matter of great concern to Australia is the many people around the world who still have limited or no access to pain relief provided by narcotic-based medicines. In the past, Australia has provided assistance to several countries to develop domestic systems to enable these drugs to be made available to patients, while preventing their misuse. To build on this work, I can further pledge an additional $100,000 from Australia to the UNODC to continue work on increasing access to controlled medicines for patients in need. We hope other Member States will join us in this endeavour.

In the context of expanding access to medicines, Australia recently passed legislation to allow legal cultivation of cannabis, where it will be used for medicinal and research purposes. Australia's Narcotic Drugs Amendment Bill 2016 ensures its compliance with the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs while enabling a sustainable supply of cannabis-based medical products for Australian patients through a national licensing scheme for the cultivation of cannabis for medicinal purposes. This legislation will facilitate more clinical trials and contribute to our knowledge of the risks and benefits of these medicines, which should benefit other countries and many people.

Australia maintains its position that prevention activities and treatments for illicit drug users are an effective and humane adjunct to law-enforcement measures. We actively endorse a public-health approach to drug use, which considers a proportional response to minor or non-violent drug-related crimes. Australia will also continue to press for the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including in relation to drug-related crimes.

In conclusion, Australia is very much looking forward to contributing to a productive session, focusing on an evidence-based and humane approach to the world drug problem and making progress in our united efforts to reduce the harms caused by it.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Christina Papoutsopoulou-Diamantopoulou, National Drug Coordinator of the Hellenic Republic .

Ms. Papoutsopoulou-Diamantopoulou (Greece): Greece aligns itself with the statement made previously by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). However, we would like to add a few words reflecting our national perspective.

At a time when universal access to essential health services is at the heart of social policy, we are called to contribute to the tackling of the world drug problem with new decision-making and policymaking models that reflect the changes and developments in science and society. The Greek drug policy reflects the European Union values of respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, development, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and human rights. In this regard, and above all, Greece fully supports the abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances, including, primarily, for drug-related offences.

In line with the European Drugs Strategy and the global drug-policy dialogue, Greek drug policy has implemented a paradigm shift towards a health-based approach, giving great emphasis on non-discriminatory access to prevention, early intervention, risk and harm reduction, effective assessment, treatment and care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration. We achieved this shift by working to update legislation in order to reflect our commitment to the protection of human rights and to promote a balanced national drug strategy that comprises alternative sanctioning measures, proportionate sentencing for drug offences, accessible treatment programmes, including in the prison system, and an institutional framework capable of ensuring synergies, collaboration and evaluation.

The world is currently facing the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. In Greece, over the past few years, we have been facing an unexpected emergency. A huge influx of immigrants and refugees has reached Greece. In many cases, the people in question are facing a wide range of problems, including in housing and health. Although Greece is experiencing a deep economic crisis, it has, as a priority, included in its national health system the equal coverage of the health needs of refugees and migrants.

Greece fully supports the actions of the United Nations in terms of respecting the human rights of users of psychoactive substances, keeping in mind that drug policies should not be based on criminalizing people who use drugs or suffer from addiction. Such practices are outdated and cost-ineffective. We would like to stress the need to create a broad cooperative network of services that plans and implements a drug policy centred on people's needs and which incorporates all scientific, evidence-based approaches. This network, which includes Governmental agencies, scientific bodies, civil society and all significant interested parties, reflects the fact that social alliances should be a precondition for building balanced, effective and human-centred drug policies.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Elona Hoxha, Vice-Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Albania.

Ms. Hoxha (Albania): It is a distinct honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Albania at this thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem. We welcome the opportunity to participate in this important debate. I also wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for his leadership on this important issue and acknowledge the efforts of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna for leading the preparations for this special session, including resolution S-30/1, which we adopted yesterday by consensus.

Welcoming the adoption of the outcome document, Albania reaffirms its firm commitment to the goals and objectives of the international drug-control conventions to which it is a State party. These conventions are the cornerstones of the global response to the world drug problem. However, we deeply regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty. Albania has continuously voiced a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, and we consider that the death penalty undermines human dignity. We also wish to underscore that errors made in its application are irreversible.

We further reiterate our determination to contribute to efforts aimed at tackling the world drug problem and at actively promoting a society free of drug abuse. To this end, the Republic of Albania has established policies on the fight against drugs and their precursors. The main anti-drug policy priorities include drafting and approving adequate legislation that is fully aligned with the European Union member States; drafting a national strategy on the fight against drugs; building the capacities of law-enforcement agencies; fortifying border control; establishing the Unified Intelligence Model with State Police, with a view to achieving the objective of intelligence-led policing; promoting inter-institutional cooperation among all actors involved in the fight against drugs; and strengthening international cooperation.

The National Drugs Strategy 2012-2016 provides strategic guidance for fighting this phenomenon. Its objectives are to create a safe environment for society by reducing supply; undertake public-awareness campaigns; provide appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services; come up with a policy to coordinate and manage the fight against drugs; and build an effective system for information-gathering and analysis.

The fight against the cultivation of narcotic plants and the production, distribution and trafficking of narcotic drugs remain high on the agenda of the Government of Albania. The new National Drugs Strategy 2017-2022 is expected in an effective manner to address new developments, including the growing threats posed by new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet and social media for drug trafficking.

I would like to reiterate that the international drug-control conventions to which the Republic of Albania is a State party place an obligation on Governments, inter alia, to ensure that controlled substances are always available for medical and scientific purposes. While promoting safety in our streets and communities, we should also emphasize the health and welfare of humankind, which represents one of the founding purposes of the international drug conventions.

In implementing the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), we must recognize the need for global drug policies that put people first. Albania therefore strongly supports and favours a drugs policy seen in a wider socioeconomic context, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), in order to promote health, democracy, the rule of law and sustainable livelihoods.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Imre Nyitrai, Deputy State Secretary for Social Affairs, Minister of Human Capacities of Hungary.

Mr. Nyitrai (Hungary): Let me start by welcoming Mr. Mogens Lykketoft as President of this special session. Hungary highly appreciates the preparatory work of the Secretariat and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). In our national capacity, we would like to highlight some additional points.

This special session is a timely and excellent opportunity to assess achievements and reflect on the situation of the world drug problem since the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Hungary welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which reflects common views, promotes the results achieved so far and identifies new challenges in the field. Although we are aware of the fact that global approaches and thinking on the drug problem differ, important steps have nevertheless been taken to meet our ultimate goal of including, in the outcome document, realities facing society globally. With stronger international cooperation and definitive national engagement, we will be in a position to formulate effective messages during the review of the Political Declaration in 2019, in line with the three United Nations drug control conventions.

While the drug problem is becoming an ever more complex phenomenon, during the past decade the rapid appearance of new psychoactive substances has become our own new reality. In order to allow an effective and swift response to the challenges posed by those substances, the Hungarian Government was among the first Member States to create an all-new drug control system in 2012. Recent drug control regulations have allowed law-enforcement authorities to seize those potentially harmful substances and step up efforts against their illicit trafficking. In that context, Hungary highly welcomes the analytical work and thorough risk assessment on the part of the World Health Organization, which led to the scheduling of several harmful new psychoactive substances by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

In 2013, the Hungarian Parliament adopted its national drug-control strategy, which will remain in force until 2020. Hungary aims to both address and counter the drug problem in a balanced way, while strengthening our commitment to the three United Nations conventions and endorsing their public-health aspects. The main goal of the strategy is to reduce illicit drug use with targeted, society-based interventions. We consider multifaceted prevention activities, a recovery-oriented approach, and more effective drug-related crime prevention and law-enforcement measures to be the most important benefits of our strategy. The strategy enables the promotion of a broader application of demand and supply reduction interventions and the mobilization of human and social resources.

We are convinced that within the global framework we can successfully address and counter the world drug problem, taking into account respective areas of competence under national legislation as well. We look forward to implementing the operational recommendations of the outcome document, in close cooperation with the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mr. Michael Botticelli, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy of the United States of America.

Mr. Botticelli (United States of America): It has been 18 years since the previous special session on the world drug problem. Since 1998, together we have made progress in addressing illicit drug use and advancing a more balanced and humane approach to drug policy. But we still have much work to do. This session represents a rare opportunity to address the issues, evaluate our progress and chart a path forward for how the nations of the world respond to the drug problem.

Illicit substance use remains a problem that ruins countless lives, families and communities and supports criminal organizations. Since the previous special session on this issue, we have had some success in disrupting trafficking and production networks around the world. That is a critical effort, and while we are encouraged by international cooperation on new psychoactive substances, more steps are necessary to address that quickly changing problem. In addition, our law-enforcement efforts should focus on criminal organizations, not on people with substance-use disorders who need treatment and recovery support services.

The United States strongly supports and has undertaken significant drug policy reform under the framework of the three United Nations conventions. Critical reforms, such as a public-health approach and investment to provide better access to treatment and less punitive approaches in our criminal justice system, are all explicitly allowed by the conventions.

As I said at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna last month, the United States firmly believes that investing in policies and programmes to help our citizens is the solution to our problem. For people with substance-use disorders, we need to provide access to proven pathways to recovery, such as medication-assisted treatment. We must address the needs of underserved populations in every country, such as women and children, youth, indigenous populations, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, rural populations and incarcerated individuals. Our drug policies must address the unique needs of all sectors of our society. We also must continue to invest in research so we can improve our strategies and policies to prevent substance-use and treat people with substance use disorders. Drug policy must be rooted in science and research.

Of course, we must still promote efforts to prevent drug use from ever beginning, and treatment strategies for substance-use disorders must be based on science and evidence. Quality interventions should be provided early so we can prevent individuals from developing substance-use disorders in the first place, and we need to make sure that evidence-based services are in place to help prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis and other preventable diseases. We need to continue to address substance-use disorders while ensuring that individuals receive safe, effective treatment for their medical needs associated with their drug use.

In the United States, we have begun implementing policies to reform our criminal justice system, reduce incarceration and provide treatment services to incarcerated people to prepare them for successful re-entry into society. That includes promoting sentencing reform and proportionality for drug crimes. After people have served a criminal sentence, we must make certain that their records do not keep them from obtaining employment or housing. Their pasts should not prevent them from having a future in our societies. President Obama has taken steps to allow individuals with criminal records to be considered for federal employment, and we are urging state and local Governments, along with private companies, to do the same. We have also worked to expand access to medication-assisted treatment, and today millions of people in the United States live in recovery.

It is not easy to make reforms, but it must be done if we are to improve the lives of our citizens and the health of our nations. To that end, the United States Government put forth a plan that balances our approach between public health and law enforcement. While we continue to work with our partner nations to counter the production and trafficking of drugs and to support their efforts to reduce demand, we have invested record amounts of domestic funding to expand access to treatment for people with substance use disorders. President Obama is calling for another $1 billion in new funding to ensure that every person who needs treatment can get it.

Future progress depends on our nations working together so that all of our citizens can live healthy, productive lives. The United States looks forward to a successful special session in support of that goal.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Sulaiman Fahad Al-Fahad, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior of the State of Kuwait.

Mr. Al-Fahad (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the State of Kuwait, to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts made by all countries and mandated by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) to prepare for this special session. We would also like to voice our deep satisfaction with the consensus achieved in Vienna, resulting in resolution S-30/1, annex, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem". We stress our full support and cooperation to ensure the success of this important session.

The delegation of Kuwait stresses the vital role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the specialized entities setting policies and programmes in the United Nations. The CND considers all matters related to combating and controlling drugs and psychotropic substances. We also value the capacity-building and coordination activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and its provision of technical assistance to countries fighting drugs.

This special session represents a genuine opportunity to take the necessary and appropriate decisions to counter the scourge of drugs, which represents a huge danger to individuals and communities. This threat could undermine the pillars of economic development and threaten stability and the rule of law. We need, therefore, genuine international cooperation and the serious resolve to confront it, based on the principle of shared responsibility, which we must all shoulder.

My delegation looks forward to our meeting giving a new impetus to achieving the desired goals and targets, including the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, as well as the Joint Ministerial Statement issued at the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, within the framework of all three international drug control conventions, the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The State of Kuwait pays special attention to the treatment of addicts and drug users. It provides them with the necessary care and rehabilitation to ensure their reintegration into society as effective and productive members, and with the necessary hospitalization and rehabilitation centres. We have pioneered the establishment of a therapeutic and rehabilitation centre that treats drug addicts, following state-of-the-art methodologies in that context. We have also undertaken and implemented programmes, with the participation of various entities within the country, to achieve the sole objective of offering treatment to those individuals, ensuring their rehabilitation and providing all the necessary health, education and psychological help.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait renews its commitment to all three international drug control conventions, the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action and 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement, in full respect for human rights within the framework of respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and for the cultural and social specificities of each country. We also emphasize our common and shared responsibility in responding to the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg welcomes the convening of this special session, which allows us to reaffirm our common determination to address the world drug problem and to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Faced with the world drug problem, Luxembourg advocates a more balanced and integrated approach that focuses on aspects of public health, in line with the original purpose of the international drug-control conventions and in full respect for human rights, as mentioned in the European Union Declaration, to which my country fully subscribes. Allow me in that context once again to reaffirm our categorical rejection of the recourse to the death penalty in all circumstances.

At the time of the previous special session on drugs, in 1998, Luxembourg had eight high-risk drug users for every 1,000 people in the workforce. Today, that rate is closer to five people per 1,000. During that same period, the mortality and morbidity associated with drugs have also been significantly reduced at the national level. Since 1998, we have adopted three national action plans that were submitted for external evaluation, and the results have enabled us to adapt response strategies. In addition to diversifying preventive measures, risk and harm reduction, treatment and social reintegration, pilot projects have been launched that, in the meantime, have become an integral part of the multiple national assistance measures available to drug users, such as opening a hall for drug use under medical supervision and else a needle-exchange programme in prisons. Luxembourg is currently one of the States members of the European Union with the highest coverage of opiate users undergoing substitution treatment and a consistently decreasing mortality rate.

At the national level, we are currently seeing a significantly increased supply of cocaine, which is causing a sharp rise in injections and is largely responsible for an upsurge in new HIV infections. Faced with those emerging dynamics, we advocate a proactive strategy to counter the negative effects of new patterns of use, such as the spread of new psychoactive substances, and an adaptive strategy to better calibrate our response to the problem in its global dimensions.

The world drug problem is constantly evolving. We must equip ourselves with the tools necessary to address current and future challenges by combining the measures proven to be effective, best practices and innovative policies in order to diversify our response strategies. It is our sincere hope that this special session and the outcome document that we have adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex), in particular its practical recommendations, will provide the means to collectively address and combat the world drug problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

At the outset, I would like to congratulate all delegations and other stakeholders on the excellent work they have done in Vienna, which resulted in the successful adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) at this special session. Much has been achieved, but challenges persist. The world drug problem remains a complex challenge to the health and well-being of humankind. It poses a major threat to human dignity, development, safety and international security. We are here at this special session to discuss these challenges — challenges that cannot be addressed in isolation but rather need to be tackled through a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach. Building on experience and evidence, drug policies should be based on an appropriate balance between demand and supply reduction measures. The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem stresses this quite clearly.

It remains a global challenge to guarantee a stronger focus on health and social problems related to drug consumption and drug addiction. At this special session, we all should engage in open debates about appropriate solutions at the national, regional and international levels, while ensuring full respect for human rights, the three international drug control conventions and other relevant documents of international law. More focus on science and evidence should allow us to address critical issues beyond ideological controversies and political disputes. In that regard, Austria stands ready to offer its experience and best practices concerning risk and harm reduction measures, including maintenance therapy, needle exchange programmes or substitution treatment in prison facilities.

Austria is strongly committed to human rights. As a cross-cutting issue, a human-rights-based approach must be the basis for any drug policy. We regret that no reference to capital punishment is included in the special session outcome document. We need to discuss the abolition of punishments that are against human dignity and the proportionality of drug-related sentences. On the other hand, Austria is pleased to see the importance of alternative development underlined in the outcome document. Austria is devoted to addressing drug-related socioeconomic issues in preventing the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants through alternative development programmes.

The world drug problem can be tackled only through successful international cooperation. In that regard, the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem, has proved to be the principal reference point, based on its broad mandate, comprehensive expertise and established partnerships.

On behalf of Austria, I express our appreciation for the responsible way the Commission on Narcotic Drugs has fulfilled the task of preparing the 2016 special session. We look forward to continuing the cooperation with all our partners, including civil society, under the trusted coordination of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Office on Drugs and Crime, on our path to 2019 and beyond.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully aligns itself with the European Union (EU) position and therefore endorses the statement made by the representative of the Netherlands, which is the current President of the EU Council (see A/S-30/PV.3).

We also welcome the adoption of the outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). The document is important in several respects. First, it confirms the importance of the goals and objectives of the three international conventions on drugs, especially physical health and the well-being of humankind. It is the health approach above all that must inform all of our policies. Secondly, the document clearly highlights the importance of a policy based on scientific evidence. Finally, it is in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Belgium recalls that consistency is essential in aligning the various elements when establishing international drug policy. Such consistency implies the right to life, security, health and health care by way of effective tools. Belgium therefore calls for the total abolition of the death penalty, including in all cases of drug-related offences. Capital punishment is in total contradiction with the international commitment to human rights and is absolutely ineffective. In general, penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence form the foundation of our criminal law. That principle is also successful as a public-health approach, as it can lead to appropriate, effective care at an earlier stage.

The right to health and health care without discrimination is essential and must prevail, whether in respect of prevention, brief and early interventions, harm reduction, treatment or more generally social integration. Risk reduction measures such as needle exchange programmes, psychosocial support and opiate substitution treatment have been shown to be effective in an extremely convincing manner and therefore have their place in effective policymaking. The right to health and health care also involves access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion. The fact that 75 per cent of the global population does not have guaranteed access to these substances must become a thing of the past. We must take action.

This situation leads to human suffering and is no longer acceptable in the twenty-first century. We welcome the emphasis placed on that topic in the outcome document. Belgium will continue to underscore this essential issue in its future policy at both the diplomatic and the practical levels. Specifically, Belgium supports the global partnership programme of the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Union for International Cancer Control, under which we have financed a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo totaling €100,000. Belgium also supports the inclusive and integrated strengthening of health care systems through cooperation with its partner countries.

The task ahead is significant. The outcome document lists the initiatives to be taken, including reviewing legislation, capacity-building and training for professionals, and developing supply management systems for various substances. Belgium recalls the importance of a thorough analysis of needs in order to ensure effective, comprehensive action. It is clear that cooperation among agencies and the role of the International Narcotics Control Board and WHO, in particular, are crucial in that area. The challenge is large and complex, but we must meet it in order to ensure the successful implementation of our instruments and policies.

The phenomenon of new psychoactive substances is alarming and merits our full attention. For various reasons, Belgium is among the countries most beset by this scourge in terms of production and trafficking. With other EU States members, Belgium will seek to develop detection mechanisms aimed at new substances on the market, concomitant regulatory systems and prevention initiatives, as well as risk reduction and treatment, in the framework of our international cooperation, which we intend to strengthen.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Allow me to salute the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Lykketoft.

Brazil welcomes this special session on the world drug problem. Despite progress since the 1998 special session, it is imperative to recognize that the world drug problem — given its complexity and multidimensional nature — remains a challenge to our national, regional and international efforts. Among the challenges we must all face are deaths caused by problematic drug use, the prevalence of diseases such as HIV and hepatitis, low levels of access to treatment, compulsory treatment, and the incarceration of drug users. That is why this special session in 2016 could not be more timely. It is an opportunity to critically assess our responses to the world drug problem and seek a consensus on more balanced, effective and humane policies.

Brazil has been fully engaged in the process. The evaluation of our policies, which we have undertaken, is already an important legacy of the process. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the dialogue and close cooperation we have established with civil-society organizations. They have been key partners throughout all our endeavours. I also underscore the centrality of cooperation and coordination with all Latin American and Caribbean countries through regional entities such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Union of South American Nations and the Southern Common Market. Our common views are much more relevant than the inevitable differences arising from specific national circumstances.

Brazil is committed to the implementation of evidence-based drug policies with a balanced, multidisciplinary and integrated approach. Respect for human rights and an emphasis on public-health issues are at the very core of that approach. We firmly seek to strengthen our policies to counter the supply of drugs, focusing on the strongest links between organized crime and money-laundering. Our capacity to detect and schedule new substances is becoming more and more efficient. At the same time, we need to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific use.

Our demand reduction policies are based on prevention, voluntary treatment, care and social reintegration. Those policies recognize the importance of harm-reduction programmes and of preventing the stigmatization and marginalization of drug users. Our legal framework emphasizes those aspects and determines that drug users should not be subject to incarceration. Ensuring the appropriate and fair application of those laws, however, remains a challenge. In 2011, our Government launched an ambitious national programme that invested approximately $2 billion over four years in activities of prevention, care and public security. Ninety per cent of those resources were allocated to public-health and social-assistance networks. That points to an important rebalancing in our efforts. It is a recognition that an effective drug policy should focus not on combating a substance, but rather on the health and welfare of humankind.

We note with great satisfaction that the evolution of the debate in Brazil seems to be aligned with the gradual evolution of the multilateral debate on the world drug problem. In that context, we wish to praise the outcome document adopted at this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). Our joint commitment is a step towards a positive review, in 2019, of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. Three points in particular that were incorporated in the outcome document are considered important by Brazil.

First is the centrality of the three drug-control Conventions, along with other relevant international instruments, and the recognition of their flexibility to accommodate different national perspectives. Second is the emphasis on respect for human rights and other cross-cutting aspects, such as the gender perspective and attention to vulnerable groups. Third is the recognition that drug policies must focus primarily on the health and welfare of humankind. Despite that evident positive evolution, we regret that it was not possible to include in the document a reference to an issue that is of central concern to Brazil, namely, the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences. We reiterate our view that the death penalty is a violation of the most fundamental human right — the right to life.

We acknowledge that there is still much room for improvement in drug policies. In the lead-up to 2019, Brazil considers it essential for the international debate on the world drug problem to incorporate two broad issues.

First, we believe it necessary to improve and diversify the indicators that are currently used to evaluate drug policies. Our understanding is that the multidimensional nature of the world drug problem demands a new metric that better reflects its complexity. Secondly, we underline the importance of linking the discussions on the world drug problem to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). I would especially highlight Goal 10, "Reduce inequality within and among countries". Brazil considers that goal to be a call on all of us to discuss alternative development policies that also reach the urban environment. It is also a call to incorporate a racial perspective into our drug policies, recognizing the specific needs of ethnic groups with a history of exclusion from public policies.

In conclusion, we welcome the progress achieved through the special session process and underscore the need for further progress as we move towards 2019.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Guyana.

Mr. Talbot (Guyana): The outcome document of this thirtieth special session, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex), is an important and welcome step forward in the global response to this monumental challenge to the health, security and well-being of all humankind. Guyana commends the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and all delegations for this very important result.

As the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *World Drug Report 2015* indicates, some 246 million people worldwide — or 1 out of every 20 persons between the ages of 15 and 64 years — used an illicit substance in the year 2013. The impacts of that challenge are pervasive across countries and regions. Strong collaborative efforts are therefore required internationally and nationally to effectively combat the world drug problem.

As a party to the three main United Nations conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and other international instruments on drug control, Guyana reaffirms its commitment to their full and effective implementation. Indeed, our ability to tackle the world drug problem is critical to our capacity to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals to which we have agreed.

National implementation efforts find expression in the fourth iteration of the national drug strategy master plan, covering the period 2016-2020, which is currently being finalized. The master plan will bring into focus, within a single framework, all national actions and concerns about drug control. It explains national policies, identifies priorities and assigns responsibility for drug control efforts. In essence, it guides the operational plans of all Government departments and other bodies involved in the reduction of demand, supply control and all other aspects of the national fight against drug abuse and its associated ills.

Also to be considered are the socioeconomic implications of the drug problem, including its impacts on public health, on children and youth and on families, as well as its links to crime, among other things. The Government of Guyana, through efforts led by the Ministry of Public Health, has accorded priority to providing treatments for drug dependency at the general and specialized-care levels in the health system, with particular emphasis on early diagnosis, drug abuse prevention and primary care. Drug-abuse prevention and treatment programmes are both community-based and residential, and provide for rehabilitation, aftercare and social reintegration.

Drug trafficking, the critical link between supply and demand, has fuelled a global criminal enterprise, valued in the hundreds of billions of dollars, that poses a growing challenge to stability and security both globally and in our region. Guyana, because of its geographical location, is seen, along with other Caribbean countries, as a strategic transshipment route for drugs originating from the producing countries in South America and destined for the largest international markets of North America and Europe.

Global collaboration and coordination are essential to securing lasting success in combating the transnational drug trade. My delegation is encouraged by the fact that national efforts to deal with all aspects of supply and demand reduction within Guyana are supported by extensive international cooperation, including at the bilateral and regional levels. In the end, effectively tackling the world drug problem will require an integrated, balanced and multidisciplinary response, undergirded by a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Guyana will continue to deploy all efforts at the policy, legislative and operational levels to ensure an effective national response.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the State of Israel.

Mr. Roet (Israel): The devastating impact of drug abuse in society is a plague that spares no nation. In Israel, as in countries around the world, substance abuse has destroyed individuals, shattered families and devastated entire communities.

Let me tell the story of someone I will call "D", a young Israeli from the southern city of Beersheba, who has been clean for 13 years and 29 days. On his journey towards freedom from addiction, D faced many challenges, but he was inspired to turn his life around in order to earn back his pride and his daughter's respect. Today, D is a certified instructor and therapist, helping others to free themselves from addiction. He has said, "When I started the process of rehabilitation, I vowed to myself that if I were successful in beating the addiction, I would dedicate everything I have to help others and prevent youths from making the same mistakes I made".

Stories like that of D demonstrate why today's discussion is so vital. This special session is an opportunity for all of us to review what has been achieved and to assess what remains to be done in order to effectively address the world drug problem. Israel welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) and its recommendations. We strongly reiterate our commitment to global efforts to achieve those important ends. We also reaffirm our staunch support for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board, as they lead international drug-control efforts in the United Nations. As we begin to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), it is important to emphasize that effectively addressing the world drug problem is a part of the broader effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. A drug-free world is a more sustainable world.

We must address the world drug problem with the goal of protecting the health and welfare of society in accordance with existing international drug conventions. Our approach must be comprehensive and balanced. Treatment for drug abuse should be based on a human-rights-centred approach that focuses on the needs of those most affected. Demand-reduction policies should be tailored to the unique needs of the target population. Programmes must be adapted to gender, age and cultural sensitivities. Adapting treatment to unique individual circumstances is what our call to make people the priority really means.

The State of Israel has developed a wide range of evidence-based interventions and programmes, beginning with prevention activities for very young children and throughout the school system. Our focus is on promoting positive and healthful life skills and encouraging parental involvement. We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our children receive every chance to succeed.

The drug abuse plague affects all sectors of society, and we must therefore provide solutions for a wide variety of individuals. In Israel, a broad range of treatment options is offered to those in need. Interventions are adapted to high-risk youths, to patients suffering from multiple chronic diseases, detainees and prisoners, homeless persons and others facing hardship. We are fully committed to ensuring that all people, regardless of their backgrounds or situation in life, get the help they deserve. Israel believes that no comprehensive approach is complete without giving those in need access to harm-reduction measures. Such measures have proved to be effective in reducing the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases.

The pandemic of drug abuse is a challenge all around the globe, so it requires a global commitment to fighting it. It is our common responsibility to share best practices and to exchange information. In collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Israel is offering annual training courses in developing countries to enhance the training of professionals working in the field of drug treatment. Such collaboration increased last summer, when the training course was geared towards the UNODC staff from regional offices around the world. The course was conducted by Israeli professionals alongside UNODC staff from the Vienna headquarters, marking yet another landmark in our growing cooperation.

International cooperation is also essential in order to effectively address the new challenges posed by new psychoactive substances. In 2013, Israel enacted legislation to combat new psychoactive substances, allowing temporary or emergency measures. The key to the approach is focusing on the sellers and manufacturers, rather than criminalizing the users. We must differentiate between those who profit from drug use and those who suffer from drug abuse.

While respecting the sovereignty of every State, we advocate that countries employ the principle of proportionality for sentencing in their judicial system. In Israel, the concept that a criminal sentence should be in proportion to the severity of the crime is a guiding principle. When appropriate, the criminal justice system also employs alternatives to incarceration, including treatment programmes, public service or fines. Particular care is given to minors in our criminal justice system, which makes the treatment and rehabilitation of minors its top priority.

It took the international community 18 years to come together again to address the world drug problem. In Hebrew, 18 is *chai*, which also means "life". Let us work together to save the lives of millions who are affected by drug abuse. Today, the world has committed itself to leaving no one behind. We should use this opportunity to enhance efforts, build positive dialogues and commit ourselves to the global goal of ending the plague of drug abuse.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 48/5, of 13 October 1993, I now give the floor to Mr. Guy Vinet, observer of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Vinet (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe): At the outset, I would like to commend the General Assembly for convening this inclusive special session. The issue we have been discussing for two days and will continue discussing tomorrow is a very important one for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and I would like to take just a few minutes to draw the Assembly's attention to what the OSCE can do to contribute to tackling it.

The combined value of the northern and Balkan heroin-trafficking routes from Afghanistan to the Russian Federation and Europe is $30 billion a year. The estimated number of young Europeans using cannabis in 2014 was 14 million. The number of new psychoactive substances monitored by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2015 was 640. Those impressive figures tell us what our challenge is.

The world drug problem affects every aspect of development, including environmental, economic and social issues. It also poses a significant threat to peace and security in a number of OSCE-participating States and Partners for Cooperation countries. Its predominant effects are on the younger generation, with long-term consequences that can extend over many years and through all social groups. Countering the transnational threats posed by illicit drugs is our common and shared responsibility, as most of the speakers before me, including the President, have said.

The OSCE is the world's largest organization formed under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It unites 57 participating States from Vancouver to Vladivostok and 11 Partners for Cooperation countries in the Mediterranean and Asia. It recognizes the leading role of the United Nations in combating illicit drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors. We emphasize the positive role of UNODC and cooperation with it, and support further strengthening our existing relationship with, among others, the International Narcotics Control Board, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, and INTERPOL, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of assistance to the OSCE region.

Based on its inherent strengths — a comprehensive approach to security, consensus-based decision-making and inclusive membership — the OSCE submitted specific recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the issues to be addressed at the special session. The OSCE Ministerial Council held in Belgrade in 2015 adopted a declaration on OSCE activities in support of global efforts in tackling the world drug problem, in which Ministers called on participating States to support recommendations to comply with the three United Nations drug-control conventions; pursue a balanced, integrated approach to include reducing supply and demand, as well as promoting international cooperation; and facilitate partnership with the private sector and cooperation among the public health, education and law-enforcement sectors. Ministers underlined that the fight against drug trafficking must be accompanied by efforts to combat corruption, money laundering and other forms of organized crime. Using the OSCE's comparative advantages, which include a network of cross-dimensional institutions and 17 field operations, we will continue to provide tailored support for tackling the world drug problem to States — which are also States Members of the United Nations — that ask to participate.

The OSCE's commitments, such as its strategic framework for police-related activities, its concept for combating the threat of illicit drugs and the diversion of chemical precursors and its border security and management concept, have laid solid groundwork for its action against illicit drugs. The relevant activities of the OSCE are making a significant contribution to the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and are carried out with full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

In conclusion, the OSCE is a force multiplier. We support our participating States and Partners for Cooperation countries through cross-cutting field operations and institutions aimed at mitigating the world drug problem. We enhance mutual cooperation among various international, regional and national stakeholders in countering the world drug problem. We command regional expertise on how to create the conditions in which individuals can live free of any threats to their security from the world drug problem. The future of the world is here today, and I wish this special session of the General Assembly every success.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sargsyan (Armenia): We are again compelled to take the floor in reaction to the comments made by the representative of Azerbaijan. I would like to point out that the Head of the delegation of Azerbaijan, Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov, devoted almost half of his address yesterday (see A/S-30/PV.1) to attacking my nation and speculating on issues based on narrow domestic narratives. It was not in line with the purposes of the special session; in fact, it constitutes abuse of the forum. Azerbaijan's portrayal of Nagorno Karabakh as a location for drug production and transit is a fantasy and an illustration of its inability to accept the existence of fully functioning and responsible governance in Nagorno Karabakh.

Not surprisingly, Azerbaijan is the only source for such claims, since in real life and within the broader international community its fantasies are not substantiated by facts. Azerbaijan simply cannot tolerate the existence of a democratic Nagorno Karabakh, fully and responsibly exercising its right to self-determination and building democratic and accountable institutions, social harmony, dignity and public consolidation against a background of its long experience of Azerbaijan's imposition of an oppressive, brutal, despotic regime inside its own country. Azerbaijan's persistent violations of human rights in its own country, its continuing attacks on and imprisonment of representatives of civil society, the media and human rights defenders, coupled with its regular dissemination of intolerance and hatred towards the Armenian people, are the causes underlying the regime's criminal military adventurism.

Azerbaijan's aggressive military response to a people's peaceful aspiration to exercising its right to self-determination serves only to legitimize those aspirations and deprives the aggressor of any claim to authority over them. Azerbaijan flouted every commitment to peace and security in the region when it unleashed a large-scale operation against the people of Nagorno Karabakh in the early hours of 2 April. In violation of the trilateral ceasefire agreement of 1994 between Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, Azerbaijan launched a heinous attack on Nagorno Karabakh using heavy artillery, armoured vehicles, tanks and air power. Its military aggression has been accompanied by dehumanizing brutality, with killings of civilians, beheadings in the style of the Islamic State, mutilations and other atrocities. Most disturbingly, that barbarity has been celebrated in public and in social media, in an affront to the civilized world.

This is a gross violation of the core international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Convention of 1949 and its protocols, and it has been duly brought to the attention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Azerbaijan's military aggression has also inflicted major damage on public and private property and facilities in Nagorno Karabakh.

The allegations that Nagorno Karabakh started the April escalation are simply baseless, since documented facts and accounts show the opposite. Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia have no reason, purpose or interest in violating the ceasefire and conducting a military offensive. Azerbaijan has refused every proposal for mediation, including calls for establishing confidence-building measures between the conflicting parties such as the creation of an investigative mechanism aimed at preventing ceasefire violations and the withdrawal of snipers from the line of contact. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh accepted the measures proposed by the mediators.

Back in the 1990s, Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh held hundreds of thousands of refugees. However, unlike Azerbaijan, neither of them has ever politicized the plight of internally displaced persons and refugees and both invested their limited resources in helping them to fully integrate. Had the leadership of Azerbaijan been sincerely and genuinely interested in finding a sustainable solution for its affected population, it would have done so over the past two decades. Instead of channelling its budget, which is majorly supported by petrodollars, towards a durable solution to the issue, Azerbaijan has decided to exploit the issue and use its petrodollars to buy extremely large quantities of arms and military hardware.

Along with its lack of respect for the work of this special session, Azerbaijan is using this debate in other settings to spew misinformation, continue its warmongering and mislead the international community. That is how its delegation is contributing to advancing our important session on the world drug problem. Instead of disseminating baseless propaganda and hijacking our forum, the delegation of Azerbaijan should have addressed in depth the growing cases of drug trafficking on its territory and tackled the issue of drug abuse among its population, since, according to a number of international reports, Azerbaijan is increasingly favoured as a transit country for the illicit trade in narcotics and is among those countries with the highest rates of injecting drug use, more than three times the global average.

It is imperative that Azerbaijan be held accountable for instigating escalation in the region and challenging its peace and security. Any position within the international community that is based on biases or religious affiliations should be rejected, and Azerbaijan should be denied any further forum-shopping, abuse of the United Nations or distortion of the purposes and substance of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and other relevant documents, and should be urged to adhere strictly to a peaceful settlement of the conflict within the internationally agreed format of the co-chairship of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I hope that the delegation of Azerbaijan will reflect on the issues I have brought to the attention of the General Assembly.

Mr. Rafiyev (Azerbaijan): We regret having to once again take the floor at the end of the day. However, the delegation of Armenia's slanderous statements compel us to respond to the groundless accusations we have just heard about my country. We find Armenia's words quite strange, considering that in its response yesterday to our statement it complained about Azerbaijan's deviation from the meeting's agenda. The statement we heard from it today covered no substantive issues pertaining to that agenda.

Yesterday and today, the Armenian delegation referred to the *World Drug Report 2015* and criticized the drug situation in Azerbaijan. It is good to see that the Armenian delegation has started reading the *World Drug Report*, since the delegation of Armenia in Vienna has always been unaware of the facts reflected in previous reports. Regarding the report itself, our authorities — unlike those of Armenia, conducting criminal activities in Azerbaijan's territory and hiding the real statistics on the drug situation in its country — have always been in favour of transparency, providing the international community with reliable statistics and supporting the work being done by our law-enforcement bodies in seizing narcotic drugs transited through or destined for Azerbaijan.

The representative of Armenia claimed that the occupied territories are not uncontrolled but under the effective control of Nagorno Karabakh. I would like to suggest that he read the *World Drug Report 2010*, which he mentioned yesterday and which clearly reflects the fact that the 132 kilometres of the southern border of Azerbaijan that were left uncontrolled owing to the unresolved conflict are a major source of the drug threat in the region.

As for the comments on human rights, it is curious that the representative of Armenia, the country primarily responsible for unleashing the war and perpetrating acts of aggression against Azerbaijan, carrying out ethnic cleansing on a massive scale, committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and other heinous crimes during the conflict and advocating an undisguised racist ideology, is now attempting to criticize Azerbaijan on issues pertaining to such notions as peace, human rights, negotiations and conflict resolution. A country half of whose population has left it has no right to speak about human rights. Every major human rights activist has left Armenia; recently one even fled to Azerbaijan. The representative of Armenia must be well aware that whatever he considers to be the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Armenian ethnic minority group living in Azerbaijan has been unequivocally described by the Security Council and the General Assembly, as well as other authoritative international organizations, as the illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and as representing other egregious violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

As a country suffering under the occupation of part of its territory and the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of its citizens, Azerbaijan is the party with the greatest interest in arriving at a speedy negotiated settlement of the conflict and an end to its consequences. Far from sharing that interest, and taking advantage of the favourable results of the military actions, Armenia is trying to consolidate the current status quo of the occupation and ultimately impose a situation of fait accompli.

The Armenian delegation has speculated on alleged ill-treatment of Armenian soldiers on Azerbaijan's territory and on the possibility of violations by Azerbaijan of international humanitarian law. The only purpose of such speculations on the part of the Government of Armenia is to distract the attention of its population from its failures and to avoid admitting its responsibility for the crimes it has committed. As we emphasized yesterday, of the 92 military personnel whom the Armenian side officially declared killed in the recent clash, more than 80 per cent were serving members of Armenia's armed forces. The question now is what Armenian soldiers were doing on the territory of Azerbaijan. That is yet more proof of Armenia's direct involvement in the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and its effective control over them as the occupying Power.

On 9 April, the International Committee of the Red Cross facilitated the return of the remains of deceased Azerbaijani soldiers from the Armenian side. The military prosecutor's office of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the forensic medical examination registered numerous signs of ill-treatment on the soldiers' bodies, including eyes injured with blunt instruments, damaged scalps, cut ears, broken bones and ripped mouths.

The Armnian delegation has condemned Azerbaijan for acting against the investigation mechanism. Contrary to the way Armenia tries to depict Azerbaijan, my country is not against any type of investigation that can bring the truth to light. Quite the contrary, for a long time Azerbaijan has been pressing for an investigation of all violations of international law, war crimes and crimes against humanity. That is in the interests of Azerbaijan and the international community, but not of the military junta of Armenia, which is led by war criminals.

Finally, we would like to deliver, the greetings of the Azerbaijani armed forces from the liberated heights of Talysh and Lalatapa, as well as Seysulan village, to the military dictatorship of Armenia.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations A/S-30/PV.5

General Assembly

Thirtieth special session

Official Records

5th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President Mr. Lykketoft .... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ollanta Humala Tasso, President of the Republic of Peru.

President Humala Tasso (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru has the honour to address the General Assembly on the important topic of the drug problem. In that connection I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the Peruvian model, which has been a successful one. Generally, in the case of countries that produce the coca leaf for illegal use, the coca plant grows where the State has very little actual presence. That is the case today in Peru. As a consequence, during its five years in power, our Government has worked to reduce the area used to grow the coca leaf for illegal purposes by more than 50 per cent. When we came to power, about 63,000 hectares were being used for the purpose of producing coca for drug-trafficking. Today, however, we have reduced that area to between 33,000 and 34,000 hectares. Our model has therefore been successful.

Another theme that I want to touch upon is that of respect for the ancestral use of coca leaves by the peoples of Peru and Bolivia. We fully respect that tradition.

The third question is how to develop those areas where States have been barely present. We are doing this through educational, infrastructure, social and health policies. Thus, in those areas that were previously exposed to such illicit economies as drug trafficking, we have brought roads, the Internet and scholarship programmes so as to give the children of farmers engaged in raising illegal products the possibility of receiving higher education.

We also implement basic sanitation programmes. When our Government came to power, only one family in three in these areas had access to drinking water. Today, after almost five years under our Government, more than two families in three on average have access to drinking water. Similarly, in these areas only 33 to 35 per cent had access to electricity. Today, more than 80 per cent of rural areas have electricity.

With regard to health policy, we are building health centres and hospitals so that the people in these areas can enjoy health services where they live rather than having to travel to other areas of the country. We are also providing training so that instead of growing coca they can grow other products. Indeed, in areas where coca was traditionally grown, Peru is cultivating and exporting cocoa and organic coffee. Today, Peru is the eighth-largest producer of cocoa worldwide thanks to the fact that cocoa is being produced in areas where coca was previously cultivated illegally. That is what we are doing on our side. We have been able to train more than 120,000 families in product diversification.

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The question I would therefore pose is: what are the drug-consuming countries doing? Drugs are produced because there are countries and societies that are able to pay for every gram of cocaine. The question is what these consuming countries are doing to counter the high demand for cocaine and drugs in general that they have created. I believe that this is an issue of common but differentiated responsibilities. We believe that there has to be genuine political will on both sides.

As for Peru, we are doing our job. We need strategic partnerships — not collaborative or cooperative relationships — with the United States, Europe and countries where drugs are consumed. They must understand that if we do not come together we will not be able to defeat one of the greatest evils on the planet, alongside the threats posed by global warming and others. That is why the Government of Peru has worked constantly and tirelessly for almost five years to fulfil its tasks, set concrete goals and send the clear message that we are fighting the scourge of drugs. What we need today is to demand that the industrialized first world also rise to the fight against drugs and forge a strategic partnership — and not, I reiterate, a relationship of cooperation, because cooperation does not entail responsibilities.

We all have a responsibility to fulfil. Peru is doing so, and on the basis of our moral stance and actions we also demand that those who have the money to pay for drugs do their job and build a strategic partnership to fight this evil.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start my address by recalling that since the 1980s the poorly named "war on drugs" has led to a scenario in which the sovereignty of countries is systematically violated and public health conditions and internal security have deteriorated, creating an environment of destabilization, intervention, interference and manipulation of democracies among our peoples. For example, before the adoption of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961, there were only 4,700 hectares of coca in Bolivia, but after its criminalization cultivation rose by more than 1,000 per cent, reaching 52,900 hectares at its height, in 1989.

Similarly, the data confirm that the war on drugs has failed. Drug use has increased throughout the world. It is estimated that a total of 246 million people aged 15 to 64 consumed illicit drugs in 2013. This figure was 150 million in the late 1990s. We have seen an increase in drug consumption of approximately 40 per cent over the past two decades. The rate of cocaine consumption in the United States is 1.6 per cent, while the world average is 0.4 per cent. By what standard of morality does the United States certify or decertify countries when we all know that nothing will be done to reduce this demand and that the highest number of cocaine users live in that country?

According to data provided by the United Nations, the illegal drug-trafficking economy is growing at a progressive pace throughout the world and by 2013 represented a retail value of $330 billion, despite the $100 billion spent on the global drug-control system. For all these reasons, we must consider in depth the geopolitical background of the war on drugs.

With the end of the Cold War and Operation Condor, the United States hoped to reduce the need to organize coups d'état and thereby provide political justification for its support for dictatorships. I believe that the drug problem offered a crafty pretext for applying an imperialist logic of control of national police and armed forces in order to intervene in the administration of States. The empire authorized this hypocritical war to lower the profile of its interventionist geopolitical military strategy in areas rich in natural resources in order to control and plunder them.

Wherever United States military bases were installed we saw a rise in drug trafficking, crime, privatizing Governments, judicial and police systems ruled by narcocorruption, illegal wealth and corrupt, subservient militaries at the service of the empire. Military bases, banking secrecy and the criminalization of the coca leaf and cultures are instruments of geopolitical control. We Bolivians therefore decided to liberate ourselves by nationalizing the fight against drug trafficking and proposing a dignified and sovereign model that guarantees respect for human rights and Mother Earth within the framework of common and shared responsibility, and with social participation and control.

With the implementation of our policy, we were able to decrease coca-bush cultivation by 34 per cent between 2011 to 2014, reaching a net surface area of

20,400 hectares, as was documented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its *Coca Crop Monitoring Survey* for Bolivia in 2014. That report confirmed that we have the lowest rate of coca cultivation in 10 years. Similarly, the International Narcotics Control Board, in its 2015 report, acknowledged for the first time Bolivia's successful actions aimed at reaching lower levels of coca production, with its share in Andean region production down to 15 per cent. Bolivia holds the record for the regional reduction rate in coca cultivation, demonstrating the success of the Bolivian model.

We appreciate the assistance provided by the European Union in the framework of shared responsibility, without any political preconditions, which has strengthened control mechanisms through social participation. We also commend the role of the United Nations in Bolivia, which has contributed to strengthening our institutional capacity to confront organized crime.

I call on this special session to take concrete actions to free ourselves from the problem of drugs — without any pretence for domination — dismantle the North American bases, put an end to interventionism and unilateral verification and adopt a resolution to end banking confidentiality once and for all.

Finally, the Plurinational State of Bolivia believes that we need to have a broad and comprehensive debate, based on the specific realities of each State, within the framework of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention and based on respect for each State's internal legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to show everyone a coca leaf, which is green in its natural state. This coca leaf in its natural state, as a product of Mother Earth, is a sacred leaf, which has fallen victim to drug-trafficking in the interests of capitalism, and is unjustly used as a pretext for domination. The coca leaf is our healthy and nutritious food, our medicine and part of our community spirit, culture and identity. It is our offering to life, not to death.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, President of the Republic of Colombia.

President Santos Calderón (*spoke in Spanish*): In 1912, when the International Opium Convention was signed at The Hague, its stated goal was to bring about the gradual suppression of the abuse of opium, morphine and cocaine. That declaration was made over a century ago. Half a century later, in 1961, in the same venue, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was adopted. Ten years later, President Richard Nixon, the then-President of the country that is the biggest consumer of drugs, declared the war on drugs. I am here today to speak on behalf of the country that has made the most sacrifices and paid the highest price as a result of that war.

The first question that we have to ask ourselves, when considering those years-long, decades-long and centuries-long efforts, is the following: after so many lives cut short, so much corruption and violence and so many young lives wasting away in prisons, can we say that we have won the war? Can we say, at least, that we are winning it? Unfortunately, the answer is a resounding no. We have neither won, nor are we winning. Logic and common sense therefore require that we rethink the issue. If the treatment that we have prescribed — which has been based primarily on suppression — has not solved the problem by now, it is time to reformulate that treatment. And that is why we are here.

At the Summit of the Americas held in Cartagena in 2012, I spoke of the need for an in-depth and evidence-based review, free from prejudices and ideologies, in order to come up with a global, results-oriented strategy on the drug problem. Within the Organization of American States, we are moving forward in that direction.

On the international level, we proposed, together with Mexico and Guatemala, making this special session a reality. We have adopted a final outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that takes a step in the right direction, approaching a more comprehensive and balanced vision in the fight against drugs. But we have to acknowledge that that is not enough and that there is a very long way to go.

What has been achieved primarily? It was accepted that the drug conventions included a margin of flexibility in their implementation and that they must be adapted to the particular circumstances of each State. Progress was also made in ensuring access to controlled substances for medical and scientific use, as is already the case in Colombia, and in seeking measures to reduce the risks and damage caused by consumption.

And what remains to be done? I would answer that much still remains to be done. What remains is to agree that human rights and the conventions that recognize and protect them cannot be relegated to second place with regard to the drug conventions. Numerous States throughout the world, including Colombia, do not consider the death penalty to be an appropriate punishment under any circumstances and that, at the very least, a moratorium on its application to drug-related offences must be adopted, while consensus is being built for its eradication. Another sign of progress is that in the document we have included alternative punishments to prison sentences and declared the importance of the principle of proportionality in sentencing.

Similarly, from the standpoint of human rights, it still needs to be stated clearly that drug use is a public-health problem and, as such, does not warrant criminal treatment. I have imagined the following scenario, and I propose that everyone present do the same. Ask any mother whether she would prefer that her drug-addict son spend years in prison or whether she would prefer that he receive treatment with health services for rehabilitation. No mother would choose to send her son to prison, because all mothers want the best for their children and because prisons are for criminals, not for addicts. Let me note in passing that addicts often become criminals while in prison.

We still must recognize that repressive measures have impacted, in unbalanced way, the weakest links in the drug-trafficking chain. Small farmers, the so-called mules and consumers are filling prisons around the world. How do I explain to a humble Colombian peasant that he is going to prison for growing marijuana when anyone in the states of Colorado and Washington in the United States can grow, sell and consume it freely? It makes no sense. We need to focus our fight on the strongest links in the chain, which are the major drug dealers, the suppliers of chemical precursors and the organizations that facilitate money-laundering. We have to hit the mafias where it hurts them most. How do we do that? By chasing their ill-gotten gains and depriving them of their exorbitant profits, which have generated so much violence and corruption. We must honestly recognize that, just as our world is not free from alcohol, tobacco or violence, we will not have a drug-free world. However, there is an enormous range of options that we can explore to improve our performance against that scourge, thereby protecting human beings and providing opportunities to rural communities that are being held hostage by drug trafficking.

Colombia is not advocating the legalization of illicit drugs. Let there be no doubt that Colombia will continue to combat organized crime, work to replace illegal crops with lawful alternatives and intercept boats and aeroplanes used to transport drugs, because for Colombia combating drugs is not only a moral imperative, but also a matter of national security.

We have been successful on many fronts. We crushed the major cartels, which were regarded as invincible in Medellín, Cali and the North Valley. Today we are working to make peace in our country with guerrilla groups that have participated in the drug-trafficking chain to make them into allies in eliminating illegal crops and in promoting alternative production projects. If we succeed, that will represent a historic and favourable turnaround, not only for Colombia but also for the entire world. Today we are working against the small cartels, because criminals adapt and change, and the States that are fighting them must do so as well. We cannot let our guard down. We are taking a brave step forward, but we must continue to move ahead. The debate on drug policy does not end with this special session. It is just beginning.

We must work to bring together the various positions so that, in 2019, when we assess what has been done under the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, we will have achieved the goal of a new global consensus on drug policies. This must be an expanded debate that also involves the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the specialized agencies dealing with health, human rights and development, and civil society and academia.

Also, so that we can be as objective as possible, we need the support of a group specifically committed to reviewing global policies and goals so as better to prepare us for 2019. In that regard, we agree with the proposal put forth by several countries to request that the Secretary-General establish a high-level group of eminent persons to help assess the bases of our current policies and propose the necessary reforms.

As it has done until now, Colombia will continue to do its utmost on this issue. We will continue to cooperate and collaborate with other nations so that they can benefit from our experience. We have already been doing that in various countries in Central America and in other parts of the world.

Today we have initiated an irreversible process aimed at changing drug policies, and we will continue that process. For the well-being of humankind, we must continue.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Georgios Pamboridis, Minister of Health of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Pamboridis (Cyprus): I appreciate this opportunity to address this high-level meeting on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus. Cyprus strongly believes that the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem provides us with an opportunity to achieve feasible and supportable solutions to the world drug problem, as well as to find common ground based on international treaties.

The Republic of Cyprus fully aligns itself with, and subscribes to, the European Union position, which supports a balanced and evidenced-based approach with its main focus on the individual and the protection of society as a whole. We consider drug dependence to be a public-health and human rights problem and priority that has to be managed in an integrated manner that recognizes its complexity. Let me also welcome Ms. Margaret Chan's call for a public-health approach to drugs.

Cyprus, together with our fellow European Union member States, maintains a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, and especially with regard to drug-related offences. We believe that the death penalty undermines human dignity, for one thing because errors made in its application are irreversible. We also strongly believe that penalties provided for under national law for all drug-related offences should be proportionate to the severity of the offence. Along those lines, alternatives to imprisonment should be offered to drug users in order to keep them out of prison and provide them with a second chance to seek treatment. That is what we do now in our country.

In order to address the challenge posed by drugs and the negative related consequences, we believe that drug policies should promote evidence-based and cost-effective measures. Such measures have been implemented in the European Union and have proved to be effective in reducing the number of drug-related deaths, crime and infectious diseases. That includes harm-reduction measures such as opioid-substitution therapy, needle and syringe-exchange programmes and naloxone provision. We strongly urge Member States to consider implementing or reinforcing such measures in the context of the drug-demand-reduction part of the balanced approach.

Cyprus would also like to emphasize the following issues as important points for consideration today: access to controlled substances for use by the scientific and medical community should be increased; the participatory role of civil society and the scientific community in all aspects of drug policy should be promoted; when addressing the drug phenomenon, the different needs of men, women, young people and children should be recognized; the challenge of new, constantly emerging psychoactive substances and the role played by the Internet in the drug supply should be addressed; and the promotion of an effective law-enforcement policy towards the illicit production and manufacturing of and trafficking in drugs should also be an integral part of the balanced approach.

We regret that the vision of a drug-free world is not a realistic one. Nevertheless, everyone participating in this session must strive to establish achievable benchmarks and policies that will succeed, thereby benefiting the lives of people who struggle with drug dependence.

Member States need to acknowledge that the global approach to the drug issue needs a major revision. We are here to voice the concerns of our respective Governments. We are also here to voice the demand of our respective citizens to put drug-law reform on the agenda. The benefits of harm-reduction approaches have never been so clear. This is a historic opportunity for the global community to reconsider its approach to drugs and to prioritize health, human rights and safety.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tayeb Louh, Minister of Justice of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Mr. Louh (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of Algeria, to commend the President and Acting Presidents of this special session on the able way in which they have presided over the session.

My country aligns itself with the statement delivered by Mr. Mohammed Hassan Zaroug, the Chair of the delegation of the Sudan, on behalf of the African Group (see A/S-30/PV.2).

My country confirms that the threats posed by the drug problem are not traditional risks any more, but are closely linked with the financing of terrorism, which is threatening both humankind and the ordinary democratic process in the world, unless the international community combats it effectively. The increase in drug trafficking is motivated by the profits that illicit trade yields. That phenomenon is also able to take advantage of the climate of insecurity and political instability, which enables narcotrafficking to flourish and become one of the most important sources of the financing of terrorism, in addition to the profits from the illegal sale of oil and ransom payments in return for freeing hostages.

As a transit country, Algeria is deeply concerned by the weakness of the policies adopted so far to limit the supply of drugs. We also find that decriminalizing the use of drugs, particularly cannabis, for purposes other than those specified in the conventions is a retreat from the gains achieved in earlier decades. In the context of our reform programme, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Algeria, Mr. Bouteflika, is implementing a national strategy to strengthen the role of civil society in raising awareness of the hazards that the scourge of drugs represents, and to give due consideration to treating drug users as a health problem.

As for drug traffickers and their ties to organized crime, we have continuously updated our legal framework. We have also established specialized judicial entities to look into drugs, terrorism and organized crime, in addition to a legal framework for the protection of witnesses. The judiciary has also strengthened international cooperation in the collection of data and evidence and in the confiscation of the yield from drug trafficking.

Algeria participated in the negotiations that led to the formulation of the recommendations that we will adopt at this session. Here, I would like to welcome the consensus that we have reached as we look forward to translating those recommendations into practical solutions, in accordance with the contents of the conventions that represent the main framework for combating the scourge of drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I come from Latin America, one of the regions most affected by the world drug problem. As we have heard this morning directly from some of our regional Presidents, every day our region sees the most tragic expressions of the dreadful drug scourge in its cities and streets. As a result, we have accumulated experience. We have acquired lessons learned and developed models for public policies through which, with greater or lesser success, we have responded to each facet of the problem.

My country, Chile, has made a commitment to observing and promoting the conventions and the international drug-control programme. Members of the international community are responsible for reaching agreements, making progress and complying with their objectives. That task is not an easy one. The various types of consumption, illicit trafficking and its connected problems vary from country to country, a situation that makes the debate complex. Moreover, it is difficult to agree on joint strategies. However, the search for effective, consistent multilateral frameworks is as urgent as it is necessary.

We believe that problems associated with consumption, the production chain and illicit trafficking in substances and other related phenomena, such as corruption, violence and money-laundering, have a profound impact on the health of our citizens. That affects the economic and political dynamic of our countries, the standards that make up the social fabric of our communities and, above all, our national and international security. In that regard, Chile is a transit country for illicit drug trafficking. Faced with a global challenge that knows no borders and which constantly reinvents itself by bringing in new substances and mechanisms for trafficking, we must act in unison, with pragmatism and with full respect for human rights, searching for the consequences of the problem and its structural causes.

Chile believes that five aspects should mark out the way forward after this special session.

First, we believe in the importance of achieving a balance in the strategies for each of the various aspects of the world drug problem, namely, supply, demand and international coordination and cooperation.

Secondly, we must understand that human rights are indisputable and absolute. In that regard, we regret that there still exist countries in which crimes related to drug trafficking are punished by the death penalty.

Thirdly, we must establish public health as a priority. Without treatment and rehabilitation systems, but above all, without prevention, we will not be able to respond to that phenomenon.

Fourthly, we must recognize the importance of inclusive and sustainable development. Without opportunities and inclusion, without jobs, without societies seeking justice and equality, the fight against drugs will be ineffective.

Fifthly and finally, we believe that it isvital to incorporate a gender perspective and the inclusion of women in the design and implementation of drug policies.

We trust in active multilateralism as a mechanism for designing strategies to deal with complex challenges such as this one. We are confident that the commitments made here will be effective in creating a horizon safe, peaceful and fair for all.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Jigmeddash Bayartsetseg, State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice of Mongolia.

Ms. Bayartsetseg (Mongolia): It is my honour and privilege to address, on behalf of the Government of Mongolia, this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

At the outset, let me reaffirm my Government's full commitment to the effective implementation of the three international drug-control conventions. In 1990, Mongolia ratified the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs; in 1999, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances; and in 2001, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Mongolia is a strong supporter of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, adopted in 2009, which seeks to reduce significantly by 2019 the cultivation and production of drugs, the demand for drugs and health-related risks. Mongolia also welcomes and supports the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of this special session.

The growth in drug trafficking has led not only to rising drug demand, but also to a growing income source that is directly interlinked with money-laundering, corruption and, subsequently, to transnational organized crime. In Mongolia, drug-related crimes have increased by 69 per cent. The number of women, for instance, involved in drug-related crimes has doubled in the past two years. The Government of Mongolia therefore attaches great importance to strengthening national legislative and regulatory responses to challenges resulting from that crime.

We have initiated comprehensive criminal-justice reform with the aim of combating the newly emerging transnational crimes, including illicit drug trafficking. As part of that reform initiative, we have revised the criminal code and the criminal procedure code, together with enacting a set of laws to strengthen the criminal-justice system in accordance with international standards. We have fully abolished the death penalty for all crimes, including drug-related crimes. The Government of Mongolia's policy on combating drug crimes focuses on supply reduction and criminalizes and prosecutes drug-related crimes. In addition, the law against money-laundering and terrorism financing was recently amended, and we cooperate closely with the Financial Action Task Force on money-laundering.

We reaffirm our determination to tackle the drug problem and to promote a society free of drug abuse. There are persistent and evolving challenges, which require a balanced approach, including more focus on public awareness of the risks of the illicit use of narcotics and on rehabilitation and health services for drug users. In 2012, the Government of Mongolia approved a programme to increase awareness among the public of the drug problem. The programme was implemented successfully at the national level with efforts targeted at high schools and universities. The Ministry of Justice also introduced an anti-drug campaign by establishing a national committee composed of the Ministry of Health, the police, the Intelligence Agency, the Border Security Agency and the Office of the General Prosecutor to prevent, combat and take effective measures against illicit drug use and trafficking. We have 21 crime-prevention subcommittees that function in each province, working directly on the ground with youth to promote healthy activities and lifestyles. Moreover, in the past three years, our Government has carried out extensive activities to eradicate cannabis cultivation.

In order to effectively combat illicit trafficking, it is essential to have capable and skilled law enforcement.

We are striving to improve the capacity of our law-enforcement agencies, particularly the police and border officers. Within that effort, the Government of Mongolia has adopted border-security management and immigration policies and has taken the necessary measures for capacity-building in the law-enforcement sector. Despite those efforts, law-enforcement agencies confront challenges such as a lack of the advanced skills and resources needed to investigate complex transnational trafficking offences.

The world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed in a multilateral setting through effective and increased international cooperation. We therefore call on all relevant United Nations bodies to assist with the implementation of the relevant international instruments and to provide technical assistance to Member States to enhance their capacities to effectively address and counter the world drug problem.

Moreover, bilateral cooperation, especially cross-border cooperation, needs to be strengthened in order to tackle drug-related problems. Effective bilateral instruments include mutual legal-assistance agreements between countries on criminal matters. Mongolia has signed 23 mutual legal-assistance and extradition agreements with nine countries and envisages concluding more such agreements in the near future. We encourage and propose the conclusion of mutual legal-assistance agreements and other bilateral instruments and cooperation.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Government of Mongolia's firm commitment to continued and strengthened cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations institutions and regional mechanisms for the strengthening of partnerships against the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mrs. María Rubiales de Chamorro, Head of the delegation of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/S-30/PV.1).

The world drug problem is a serious threat to the peace and sovereignty of States, undermining the socioeconomic and political stability and sustainable development of our peoples. Our Government, led by the President, Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, maintains a firm position in relation to the world drug problem based on comprehensive care and treatment. Nicaragua, in the very heart of Central America, is neither a producer nor a consumer of drugs. It is, however, a country situated, unfortunately, in a transit region. We acknowledge the full relevance of the United Nations conventions on narcotics — that of 1961 with its 1972 Protocol, and those of 1971 and 1998 — and we call for their effective implementation.

The deregulation and legalization of drugs does not represent a viable option, because it encourages the use of drugs and is contrary to the international instruments that are currently in force and form the key elements of the system on drug prohibition. The world drug problem must be tackled while respecting the national priorities of States and the particularities of their respective national legal systems, strictly abiding by the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The world drug problem forms an integral part of the larger problem of transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, which has led to high levels of violence and insecurity, affecting many regions and countries of the world.

I would like to reaffirm the principle of common, shared and differentiated responsibility. From that perspective, we support the broadest possible international cooperation, including the exchange of experience and best practices and encourage making available more financial and logistical resources to transit countries, so that we can move forward with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The world drug problem remains a challenge for global and regional security and the health and welfare of humankind. We have therefore implemented public policies and drug strategies centred on the human being, the family and the community, within the framework of the principle of sovereign security. Nicaragua does not support lists and rejects unilateral certifications and similar measures relating to the drug problem.

Within the framework of our Christian, socialist and solidarity model, designed to address the problems caused by drug trafficking, we have implemented the following actions, which are noted in the document that is circulating — the strategy of a containment wall against drug trafficking; the strategy of citizen and human security under the model of prevention, proactivity and community; the national campaign entitled "A Nicaragua free of drugs"; and an effective criminal-justice system, based on the principle of proportionality. In Nicaragua, the death penalty does not exist. Our approach has made Nicaragua into a country with one of the highest levels of security for our citizens on our continent.

In conclusion, we participated in the Vienna discussions and we are participating in this special session in order to reflect on the world drug problem and to analyse and discuss the effective means needed to strengthen international efforts aimed at finding solutions for the betterment of all our peoples.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Finland.

Mr. Sauer (Finland): Finland fully aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the European Union (EU) on behalf of its member States during this special session (see A/S-30/PV.1).

We note that several important issues could not be addressed in the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex); nevertheless, we regard the document as an achievement. Finland believes that the international drug-control conventions need to be implemented comprehensively with respect for a human-rights-based approach, as the health, well-being and safety of people and societies should be at the core of drug policy. In that context, we would like to reiterate the calls made by several delegations for the abolition of the death penalty.

In Finland, successfully applied harm-reduction measures have not changed our commitment to implementing the international drug-control conventions. We have a comprehensive ban on drugs. But at the same time, we do see that those who need help also have a right to services. The positive effects of harm reduction are tangible in Finland. We have fewer new HIV infections each year among drug-injecting users. Providing injection equipment, vaccinations, anonymous HIV/AIDS and hepatitis testing, and making available sexual and reproductive health measures, as well as opioid substitution treatment, have measurably improved the health of the target populations. Evidence shows that those measures have reduced drug-related criminality and increased security in our communities.

We have learned that if we really want to reach out to the most disadvantaged drug users and to develop services that are best for them, target-group participation is essential. In our national drug policy, cross-cutting issues such as gender concerns have been taken into consideration. However, we acknowledge that further work remains to be done in addressing the needs of, inter alia, sexual minorities.

We also wish to raise our concern over the emergence of new psychoactive substances. As the EU delegation has already highlighted, we would like to reiterate our commitment to address the growing challenges and threats posed by such new substances, especially to young people.

In Finland, one of our strengths is the inter-agency cooperation among the police, customs agents and border guards. Intelligence gathered by law enforcement and other relevant authorities is shared, and cases are analysed jointly and responded to in a coordinated manner. Notably, the police also play a key role in operational harm-reduction measures. We would also like to highlight the fact that joint crime investigations with other countries, particularly the implementation of the concept of joint investigation teams, truly improve international cooperation. As a result, investigation becomes more effective, and criminal liability is established in the right place. Finland regards that cooperation as very successful.

Finland does not see the key question with regard to today's drug policies as being whether to support health- or control-based policies. We urge States to promote overall participatory and inclusive policies to deal with the diverse realities and challenges that States face. We know from experience that, in order to achieve the best results in health and well-being, multidisciplinary cooperation among international agencies, national authorities and stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and grass-roots actors, is needed. In our view, therefore, a more participatory policy approach to the implementation of the recommendations of the special session's outcome document can contribute to wider achievement of the important Sustainable Development Goals in addressing the world drug problem.

Finally, while closely following the discussions and negotiations leading up to the current special session, Finland feels that there is indeed room for more inclusive participation in tackling the world drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Mustafizur Rahman, Director General in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I am delighted to address this special session on the world drug problem. This gathering provides us an important opportunity to strengthen our resolve in addressing this formidable challenge of our time. The drug problem affects every nation and all sectors of society. No country can claim to be free of that scourge. Addressing the drug problem will therefore require the active and continued involvement of all Governments, all societies. It is a common and shared responsibility of us all.

Clearly, the drug problem has many dimensions and many facets. It affects health, human rights and sustainable development, among others. It leads to corruption and organized crime. Its abuse causes tragic and terrible human costs to users, their families and their communities. Drug-trafficking and organized criminal networks fuel violence and feed corruption. Profits from drug trafficking are funding terrorism and violent extremism. We must end the exploitation by unscrupulous individuals and groups of vulnerable people susceptible to drug use in our societies.

Last year, global leaders adopted a transformative agenda for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Under Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Member States agreed to strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and the harmful use of alcohol, a goal that we must all strive towards. In fact, addressing the world drug problem is not just an issue for SDG 3, but something that impacts many other SDGs. It is also linked to issues such as organized crime, health and public well-being, which are integral factors in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Countering drug-related crimes and corruption is imperative so as to achieve stable societies and effective institutions, which constitute a foundation for sustainable development. Drugs affect not only development and a life of dignity, but also stability and security.

The Government of Bangladesh attaches great importance to combating the drug problem. We have been carrying out our anti-drug campaign in collaboration with all stakeholders and the involvement of civil society, non-governmental organizations and relevant international entities. We have a robust legal framework in place. Our national narcotic control act was enacted in 1990, and supplemented later by a number of relevant rules, strategies and programmes. Drugs addicts are being provided with the necessary treatment and rehabilitation facilities. We have also initiated a massive anti-drug awareness campaign on countering the drug problem. We have strengthened the capacity of our law-enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking and the abuse of drugs.

At the regional level, Bangladesh is party to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. We have signed memorandums of understanding with many regional countries, such as Myanmar, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, on preventing illicit trafficking in drugs. We are working in close partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the International Narcotics Control Board, Interpol and the SAARC drug offence monitoring desk to combat the challenge of illicit drugs.

We realize that tackling illicit drugs requires a long-term, integrated and multidisciplinary approach. It calls for coherence among our public health, social, educational, sustainable development and law-enforcement policies. It entails the engagement of all stakeholders at the local, regional and international levels. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the important outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which reaffirms our joint commitment to effectively address and counter the drug problem worldwide. The outcome includes important recommendations on the wide range of aspects of the problem; its effective implementation would take us a long way in fighting this global scourge.

We look forward to the continuing role of the CND as the policymaking body of the United Nations with the primary responsibility for drug-control matters. We also recognize the good work done by UNODC as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem. On our part, we stand ready to work with all concerned to fight drugs for the well-being of our generation and those that follow.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania recognizes that drugs have destroyed many lives and that, for too many years, Government policies have not been very successful. We accept that it is time for all of us to adopt new approaches. We therefore commend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, whose preparatory work led to this special session of the General Assembly, and we welcome the outcome document adopted by the Assembly (resolution S-30/1, annex).

We also recognize that we stand at a turning point where the new dispensation demands that scientific evidence and our concern for health and human rights shape our national and international drug intervention policies. It is in that regard that Tanzania sees this special session as presenting a watershed opportunity to rebalance and harmonize international and national policies on drugs. We therefore believe in the value, and indeed the imperative, of adopting and implementing the outcome document. It should be the bedrock of our common approach and renewed effort in addressing the challenges we face. We also acknowledge that this undertaking must be grounded in the principles of human rights, equity and social justice.

When it comes to combating the global drug problem, our collective credibility is on the line. The implementation of the relevant key international instruments that constitute the cornerstone of the international drug-control system has not proved outstanding. We have often claimed that we need to do more and better to tackle this malady that poses a serious threat to human life and undermines development. It is a complex problem that does not lend itself to easy solutions; nonetheless, we cannot afford to fail.

As we move forward, our objective must be to focus on reducing the number of people who use drugs, as well as that of those who die from drug use. We should also ensure that minor offenders do not end up in jail, where their drug-related problems might only worsen. We must promote a health and human rights approach to the drug problem. We are conscious that this objective will be successful only as a result of a collective endeavour, nationally and globally.

Tanzania has not been spared by the world drug problem. Illicit drugs trafficked from other regions are increasingly crossing our borders, with some remaining in our communities and inflicting harm upon vulnerable people, including persons who already suffer from multiple forms of poverty. The drug problem inhibits our collective vision for a life of dignity for all and incapacitates the workforce needed to achieve our aspiration for social and economic development. It fuels serious crimes, including wildlife and forestry crimes, and places additional burdens on law-enforcement agencies and our national health systems.

In the meantime, our national efforts in confronting the menace include establishing support systems for addicted persons who also risk being exposed to HIV and hepatitis B and C. We continue to identify and monitor trends in the prevalence and distribution of psychoactive substances. We also monitor methods of use and their related consequences. We are also strengthening our national legislative, regulatory and operational responses with different stakeholders, including educational, health and law-enforcement authorities as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society.

Transnational organized crime and drug trafficking have a destabilizing effect on State security. We believe that the implementation of conventions on transnational organized crime and corruption will also contribute to our individual and collective efforts in addressing the drug problem. In addition, we propose holding discussions at the level of the General Assembly to consider the scope of, and appropriate interventions against, this threat, as well as the progress being made in that regard.

Even as we reaffirm our commitment to implementing the outcome document, we believe that international cooperation is indispensable for fulfilling its goals. We also believe that programmes focused on alternative livelihoods in drug-producing countries will reduce the flow of illicit drugs to our countries. We must therefore seek multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing and balanced approaches aimed at providing effective supply and demand reduction strategies.

In conclusion, we hold the view that we should not permit ourselves to become divided over policy preferences with regard to applicable penalties. The fact that the Assembly is in full agreement on the severity of the problem and that we must act collectively and urgently is, in itself, a great achievement.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Principality of Monaco.

Ms. Picco (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Principality of Monaco wishes to reiterate its strong commitment to addressing the world drug problem while respecting fundamental human rights, the rule of law and the right to universal access to care. Monaco categorically opposes the use of the death penalty under any circumstances.

My delegation thanks the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for their comprehensive and humane approach to this scourge, which undermines our societies, hinders our development efforts and contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases.

Civil society must be our first partner in implementing the commitments made at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 16.

My Government is preparing a new anti-drug action plan that will be part of its efforts to combat all addictions. Protecting young people is a priority. Prevention programmes in the form of health education on topics tailored to various age groups have been implemented in schools, with the assistance of multi-stakeholder committees on health and citizenship education. Identifying troubled youth at an early date is another area of prevention where the different structures involved work as a network.

To prevent consequences for public health, the Principality of Monaco complements its preventive efforts with access to speedy and effective care. Individual-centred care centres combine detoxification and counselling in order to ensure rehabilitation and social reintegration. Furthermore, in the health sector, focus is placed on youth with the establishment of "young consumer" consultations that provide appropriate care. The associations Jeune, J'écoute and Allô Parents provide anonymous support, enabling the families concerned not to remain isolated.

Monaco is party to all international instruments related to drugs and adapts its legislation as new illicit products emerge. On 1 January, Monaco became the thirty-eighth member of the Council of Europe's Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs, also known as the Pompidou Group.

We firmly believe that only increased international cooperation, through an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach — can we stem the threat of the international drug trade and all criminal activities associated with it. That is why Monaco will continue to provide unwavering police and judicial cooperation. We reiterate our commitment to combat transnational organized crime.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): At the outset, Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). Allow me to share some additional remarks in my national capacity.

In Slovenia we are committed to the balanced implementation of the pillars of demand and supply reduction and to international cooperation under the principle of common and shared responsibility. We are glad that is reflected in the outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). We also welcome the resolution's focus on human rights and public health, the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, new challenges and threats, as well as alternative development. We believe that the flexibility of the three United Nations drug-control conventions, together with the universal human rights instruments, provide a good basis for such policy.

The factors that place people at risk of using drugs vary throughout the world, as do the structures and resources to protect the health of those individuals, their families and societies. On the other hand, there are proven policies and interventions to prevent people from starting to use drugs and to treat drug use disorders.

Slovenia has established and has been systematically developing drug legislation and policies for a number of years. My country decriminalized the possession of a small quantity of any drug for personal use in 1999, with the aim of encouraging treatment instead of penalization. Emphasis has always been placed on public health aspects, including harm reduction programmes and substitution treatment.

In Slovenia we firmly believe that all drug programmes should be evidence-based, evaluated and accessible to all people with drug-use disorders. We would therefore like to underline the importance of developing a multisectoral and fully coordinated approach. Such an approach includes the cooperation of multiple agencies from different fields, such as education, social welfare, health and law enforcement. Only together can they develop a full continuum of demand-reduction programmes that promote prevention, early detection and intervention, treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration for all people suffering from substance use disorders. In Slovenia it is the Ministry of Health that coordinates that work.

We also believe that harm-reduction measures are indispensable for successfully solving the drug problem, including for preventing the transmission of infections such as HIV and hepatitis. Such programmes, which are based on respect for human rights and human dignity, have been rigorously evaluated in many countries, and their results demonstrate their effectiveness.

While we welcome the positive elements in the resolution, we truly regret that it was not possible to include language on the death penalty. Slovenia resolutely opposes the use of capital punishment under any circumstances.

Slovenia has positive experience to share with regard to addressing the drug problem. We are striving for enhanced regional cooperation, particularly in South-East Europe. A programme of bilateral technical assistance for countries of the region was set up five years ago and promotes balanced drug policy measures, from countering drug trafficking to treating drug-use disorders.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the world drug problem can be solved only through international cooperation and in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. Progress must be based on verifiable facts and reasoning, and broad dialogue between all stakeholders must be promoted. On behalf of Slovenia, let me therefore express the sincere hope that our joint efforts will lead to a comprehensive and humane drug policy that will put people and their health first.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am very pleased to see you presiding over our work, Madam.

The holding of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem is a testament to increased global awareness of the drug problem and its tragic consequences on health and economies, as well as on the security of States. Illicit drug trafficking finds fertile ground where State institutions, in particular security institutions, are weak. Illicit drug use by young people and children is very often linked to poverty, fear and instability. It can also be linked to the lack of opportunity for a better future due to unemployment and social marginalization. There is no doubt that illicit drug trafficking increases crime, violence and corruption rates, and it places a terrible burden on the human and financial resources of States.

This is a worldwide problem with transnational effects. Fighting it therefore calls for cooperation and coordination on security at the international and regional levels, as well as an exchange of information to fight narcotic and psychotropic drugs and to bring an end to the trafficking of those substances. The various aspects of this problem, however, cannot be countered in terms of security alone. It must be at the centre of national and regional development programmes and strategies, in particular by combating the cultivation of plants used to manufacture psychotropic drugs, and combating other effects, such as money laundering and flows of profits made from drug trafficking. It is also necessary to address the reasons for drug use, in particular by providing opportunities for jobs and education for all. Legislation on drug use should also be improved, while responses should not be primarily based on punishment. Reforms are needed.

Libya reaffirms the collective responsibility for dealing with this problem. We also reaffirm our commitment to the various relevant international instruments. We welcome the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as well as of all the relevant institutions, and call for strengthening their capacities so that they can provide technical support to Member States. We also call on the international community to provide financial and technical assistance to other Member States, particularly developing States, with a view to building their own capacities to counter the problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Mr. Hyassat (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My Government has been working arduously on Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 16 to ensure that everyone in our country can live a prosperous life with access to health care. I would like to reiterate that, given the impact of drugs on development and its relationship to crime, we need to strengthen international cooperation. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1, which provides a practical framework to supplement international conventions. Its objectives must be fully implemented and partnerships must be set up with all involved, including young people and civil society, so as to achieve real progress and fulfil our aspirations.

The Kingdom of Jordan, under King Abdullah II, is stepping up efforts to combat the scourge of crime and drugs. We have made ongoing efforts to strengthen our legislative and institutional framework. Recently, we prepared draft legislation that should be more effective in dealing with and preventing this scourge. We have also established a national committee tasked with examining what efforts need to be made to combat the scourge of drugs. That draft legislation should be adopted shortly. We also have in place a comprehensive strategy to combat drugs that involves the participation of all institutions interested in the fight against drugs, be they public or private. We declared 2016 as the year to combat drug abuse in order to boost drug-control efforts and combat illicit trafficking in psychotropic substances.

At the regional and international levels, Jordan has stepped up cooperation with other States and institutions and recently held, with the cooperation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the first regional meeting. We are the first country in the region to apply the vessel drug-control system. In that regard, we should continue to work to strengthen the capacity of the Office and the United Nations to assist States in the implementation of that pioneering project.

In terms of armed conflict, the threats faced by several parties across the world, which complicate the fight against drugs and encourage illicit trafficking in neighbouring countries, affect Jordan, in particular its security services. Given the enormous number of refugees we host, concerted efforts on the part of the international community to support Jordan, based on the principle of collective responsibility, are needed.

In conclusion, we wish to renew our support for UNODC. We trust that it will continue to work effectively to stop the scourge of drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Castaneda (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): El Salvador comes to this special session of the General Assembly convinced that the fight against the world drug problem is an inescapable and urgent commitment. The President of the Republic, Salvador Sánchez Cerén, has expressed his particular interest, and that of his Government, in working arduously to fight drugs. We are convinced that policies should put the interest of human beings and respect for their fundamental rights, with a focus on gender focus.

I wish to express my Government's commitment to comply with the relevant international instruments, in particular the three United Nations conventions on drugs. The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and the accomplishment of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which we agreed on here at Headquarters, must be translated into reality for the benefit of our societies.

With both a sense of commitment and gratitude, El Salvador represented the Groupo of Latin American and Caribbean States on the preparatory board for this special session. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our desire to work together and contribute, while also respecting differences and strengthening understanding and dialogue in order to achieve the implementation of comprehensive policies to address the world drug problem.

This special session is a major political commitment towards 2019, and is, in addition, a milestone for strengthening subregional, regional and international cooperation. Therefore, we must ensure that technical and financial assistance are coherent and consistent with the various existing dimensions and realities, bearing in mind that we are facing a common problem and that we have shared but differentiated responsibilities.

This meeting is an opportunity to see the global picture in all its complexity, taking into consideration the progress, achievements, weaknesses, as well as the new experiences of our countries in recent years. Our common goal is to define a comprehensive international drug policy that is in line with current challenges and based on respect for human dignity.

El Salvador is convinced that this problem requires comprehensive and balanced actions aimed at promoting the health and welfare of the individual, family and community. El Salvador, as members know, is not a country of massive drug consumption. Neither is it a drug-producing country. It is a transit country, as are most of those countries represented here today. We therefore have a specific issue that we would like to see more clearly reflected in the overall strategy established by the United Nations to address the drug problem.

Specifically, the link between our country and international drug-smuggling operators with specific extralegal structures has given rise to violence, deep social conflict and the loss of human life, resulting in waning investment opportunities for the development of our communities. That is what led us to incorporate a socioeconomic dimension in our strategic plan against drugs, which was approved in 2011 and is being renewed this year, its fifth year of existence.

The obvious existing link between youth gangs — or maras, as we call them — and drug trafficking, money laundering, and illicit trafficking in arms and persons constitutes a growing threat to the safety of not only Salvadorans, but the entire Central American region. We must therefore join efforts among all national sectors to change that reality.

El Salvador is committed to strengthening the national anti-drug strategy, incorporating policies, objectives, resources and institutional efforts, in both the public and private sectors. In that effort, the cooperation of friendly countries is essential for our subregion to strengthen its institutions, preserve the human rights of citizens and implement initiatives to facilitate the socioecoomic reintegration of young people involved in illegal activities. However, without opportunities for decent work, vocational training and recreational activities, our efforts to encourage our youth to abandon gang ties and have a genuine, humane future will be unsuccessful.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the commitment expressed during this special session by Member States, as well as by international organizations and civil society, bears witness to a strong will to go beyond dialogue and to make a commitment to act firmly with respect for our differences, and with the strong conviction that together we can be the architects of a society free of drug abuse.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan): I have the honour to deliver the statement of His Excellency the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Sudan, who, unfortunately, was not able to participate in this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem due to the non-issuance of an entry visa by the host country.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

At the outset, the Sudan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations in Vienna on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/S-30/PV.2). We also align ourselves with the group of like-minded States with regard to the topic at hand.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to applaud the valuable efforts and contributions made by all the relevant entities and parties that have led to the convening of this special session. We welcome the holding of this special session and affirm its importance at a time when the world drug problem is growing increasingly complicated. Without a doubt, this session represents an important opportunity to consider and assess the situation and to develop a vision and recommendations on how to effectively address the various drug-related issues.

My delegation reaffirms its commitment to the framework provided by the three relevant international drug-control conventions, in addition to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, as the appropriate and adequate basis to address the issue of drugs. In addition to being comprehensive and flexible, which is necessary to allow all Member States and other actors to face the drug problem, we also find that the framework is a practical one with which to implement the principles of international cooperation on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility. We believe that regional, international and bilateral cooperation are necessary to achieve a world free of drugs, in particular given the means employed by drug gangs to carry out their activities. In that regard, my delegation reiterates the importance of strengthening all means of solidarity and cooperation among nations, particularly through the sharing of intelligence and the detection of illicit financial flows. The Sudan has been successful in the detection of several drug-trafficking cases. In that regard, I would like to commend the cooperation by the relevant authorities in my country with those of other countries, in particular the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

Experience has proved that addressing the drug problem in all of its complexities requires a variety of initiatives, including health, economic, development, security and legal solutions. I wish to reiterate the commitment of the Sudan, as part of a comprehensive framework of development policies, to achieve a secure society. In that vein, and due to our belief in the importance of cooperation in the area of security, we have endeavoured to cooperate and to strengthen the relationship between society and law-enforcement agencies. We have implemented a programme in residential areas, which has had excellent results in terms of reducing crime levels.

In order to strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework with regard to drugs, in 2015 we adopted a national strategy with such related legislation as a law to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. Pursuant to that law, a financial investigations unit was established and given the requisite autonomy to undertake full investigations. We have also issued guidelines and set up procedures for international cooperation with a view to addressing legal matters, in the form of commissions empowered to examine witnesses, extradite persons charged with drug crimes, and call for the forfeiture of funds. We have also amended our drug-trafficking law to grant the necessary authority to the relevant entities.

We have identified trends in the area of drug use in my country. As a result, we have seen an increase in the amount of substances confiscated and in the number of drug-trafficking cases involving trafficking towards Europe and the Arab Gulf States. We have detected a strengthening of the relationship between drug traffickers and those who are cultivating the drug-precursor plants. We have also observed an increase in the abuse of medicinal substances and a greater diversity of such substances entering our country. The situation in my country has changed to the extent that we are seeing an expansion in the development of heptagon pills. We recently seized a laboratory that was manufacturing such pills for drug traffickers.

We are striving to confiscate improperly obtained pharmaceutical substances and to prevent their abuse. Having identified new types of drugs, including psychotropic substances, my country has taken steps to allow for their confiscation, in particular by developing a manual of standardized procedures for the confiscation of such substances. Last March, we held a national forum of the relevant parties to coordinate all these efforts.

In conclusion, my delegation attaches great importance to drug-replacement programmes, which are one of the most effective ways to combat drugs. We look forward to entering into joint projects with international organizations and donors to make such programmes viable. We underscore our policy to criminalize drugs and the use of drugs. Any leniency in that regard will have a negative impact in the short and long term and will open the door to drug gangs taking advantage of indecisiveness.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Slovak Republic.

Ms. Algayerová (Slovakia): We fully align ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1). I would also like to add few words on behalf of Slovakia, acting in my national capacity.

The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem is a unique global forum for reviewing the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and for discussing our achievements thanks to and the challenges that have arisen from the operation of our national drug policies.

Slovakia welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) following the comprehensive and inclusive preparatory process. The document reiterates our commitment to the goals and objectives of the three international drug-control conventions, including the health and welfare of humankind. The three drug-control conventions and the universal human rights instruments are cornerstones of international drug policies. Slovakia believes that drug policies should follow an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach. Respect for human rights should be an integral part of our efforts. We therefore regret that the outcome document fails to include language on the abolition of death penalty for drug offences.

The basic programmatic document for the Slovak drug policy is our national drug strategy for the period 2013-2020 and related action plans being implemented by the relevant Slovak ministries. The overall aim of the strategy is to contribute to reducing drug demand and drug supply, as well as mitigating the health and social risks and harm caused by drugs. The strategy has been built on an awareness of current drug problems, including the use polysubstances and stimulants, including methamphetamine, the need to control medications containing psychoactive or drug-precursor ingredients, the challenges posed by blood-borne viruses, the need to improve coverage for treatment services and the changing dynamics of drug markets.

The dominant characteristic of the strategy is its integrated and balanced approach. Another important element of our drug policy is coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. New challenges such as, inter alia, the rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances require greater cooperation and a stepped-up exchange of information among Member States. Slovakia also supports the involvement of civil society and the scientific community as well as the coordination among the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and other United Nations entities and specialized agencies.

We believe that this special session and its outcome document create a solid basis for further international community action in the coming period and for the Review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action to be held in 2019.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Industry, Information and Labour of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): In 1998, the General Assembly special session on drugs decided to "establish the year 2008" — 2008 — "as a target date for States, with a view to eliminating or significantly reducing the illicit manufacture, marketing and tracking of psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs". The year after that self-imposed 2008 deadline, at the high-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Member States met again and established a new cut-off date for the elimination of psychotropic drugs: the year 2019. Today, I am surprising no one by predicting that we will not meet our 2019 target.

For this United Nations process to maintain any semblance of credibility, this week's gathering cannot be another exercise in naive prescriptions, repetition of failed measures or kicking the can down the road. We must instead engage in an honest clear-eyed analysis of what works, what is realistically achievable, and what new measures can address our shared goal of a world freed from the scourges of drug addicts, drug dealers and a destabilizing global drug trade.

The impacts and potential solutions to the world drug problem vary depending on where one stands. States that primarily supply, demand or serve as transit points for narcotics have very different views on effective drug-control strategies. Historically, the traditional approach to the international narcotics trade has had a disproportionate impact on developing nations, the poor and particular racial and ethnic groups. Those traditional approaches have remained troublingly static in a rapidly changing world.

The by-products of applying outmoded solutions to an evolving problem include irreconcilable inconsistencies in trade and immigration policy, in the prevalence of organized crime and in the manner in which a State's right to development is adversely affected by global law-enforcement and interdiction measures. It is entirely possible that more lives have been lost to the war on drugs and rival drug gangs than to the actual abuse of drugs. At the same time, the obscene sums spent on interdiction, enforcement and eradication have nonetheless spurred the growth of a global illicit drug trade worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates the caution issued yesterday by the representative of Jamaica (see A/S-30/PV.3) that the solutions to the world drug problem are not one-size-fits-all and that approaches must be sensitive to the imperatives of culture, religion and science. In that regard, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has established a regional commission on marijuana to conduct a rigorous inquiry into the social, economic, health and legal issues surrounding marijuana use in the region and to advise on whether there should be a change in the current drug classification of marijuana, thereby making the drug more accessible for a particular range of users.

In examining the feasibility and desirability of the production and use of cannabis for medicinal purposes and the decriminalization of small quantities of the plant for personal or religious use, the Commission will no doubt be mindful of recent trends in the decriminalization and legalization of marijuana in other States, the sometimes inconsistent approaches within States, and the changing perspectives on marijuana use worldwide. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is hopeful that the CARICOM Commission will soon produce a set of recommendations that can be accepted and applied across the region.

However, the potential for liberalization of the legal status of marijuana should not be misconstrued as a case of "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Quite the contrary, it represents a strong desire to adhere to international commitments by properly focusing efforts and limited resources on the control of illicit drug flows, the rehabilitation of users and a firm and unyielding approach to the brutal criminal gangs that wreak havoc within our communities.

The road to our current predicament has been paved with the good intentions of well-meaning citizens and the poll-tested tough talk of those who have leveraged fear, anger and loss of victims of the war on drugs to their collective advantage. The road out of this cul-de-sac of trite, ineffective rhetoric requires an approach that is focused not on drugs but on the people and populations affected by addiction, abuse, violence and fear. It demands the courage of new thinking and innovative approaches. Ten years from today, let it not be said that the international community continued to delude itself about the efficacy of its war on drugs. Instead, let this special session be remembered as the turning point in crafting meaningful, workable, country-specific solutions to a vexing but eminently solvable problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of Maldives.

Ms. Mohamed Didi (Maldives): The Maldives believes this session, the first special session of the General Assembly since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), provides a unique opportunity to galvanize international cooperation in order to effectively address and counter the world drug problem. The Maldives remains confident that target 3.5 of the Agenda, on strengthening prevention and narcotic drug abuse, will provide impetus to international efforts aimed at addressing the world drug problem. We also stress the importance of designing evidence-based drug policies grounded in reliable data, science and analysis. In this regard, we note that the global indicator framework being developed for the 2030 Agenda has provided a real opportunity for framing the world drug problem by selecting the right indicators. The Maldives furthermore believes that critical to addressing the growing international nature of this phenomenon is the political will and ability of all members to implement evidence-based policies and practices in line with the three international conventions on drug matters.

The Maldives is an archipelago of 1,192 islands situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Although we are neither a producer nor a manufacturer of illicit drugs, our location makes us a vulnerable point for illegal shipments of precursor chemicals and drugs meant for other ports. This problem has evolved with the increasing number of substance users and the increasing prevalence of drug abuse among young people. Young people make up 46 per cent of the entire Maldivian population. The Maldives believes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to countering the world drug problem and that each country's policies must address its own specific needs.

The Maldives' national strategy to tackle the issue of drugs is based on four pillars: prevention; treatment and social reintegration; governance and system development; and efforts to reduce the drug supply. These four pillars are complementary to one another and constitute areas of action. The Maldives national drug policies are underpinned not just by our firm conviction that we need to build safer and more just societies, but are also supported by human-rights principles, which place people at the centre.

The enactment of the Drugs Act in 2011, repealing the 1977 Drugs Act, was a milestone in the Government's efforts to combat drug abuse and drug-related offences. The new law represents a paradigm shift in viewing drug offenders as victims in need of rehabilitation. The legislation provides for the prevention of the use, peddling and trafficking of drugs and includes measures to motivate drug-dependent persons to enrol in treatment and rehabilitation programmes with a view to facilitating their reintegration into the community as responsible citizens. The Government is also collaborating with rehabilitation centres in neighbouring countries to allow for requests to seek rehabilitation overseas, as allowed by the Drug Act.

In order to strengthen monitoring and prevention efforts, the Maldives police and border authorities have tightened surveillance across the Maldives to eliminate smuggling and distribution of drugs. In addition, starting last year, they have been using K-9 dogs to detect drug smugglers.

The issue of illicit drugs and related activities goes beyond regions, representing a global challenge. The nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism threatens peace and security. The Maldives emphasizes the need to join forces, especially among international partners, to effectively counter the world drug problem. In line with this objective, Maldives is working with countries in its region to establish a regional coordination centre for South Asia through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

For far too long, drugs have been tearing the social fabric of society, igniting violence, spreading disease and robbing our young people of their futures. We must seize the opportunity provided by this session to do more and to do better. The Maldives will continue to engage domestically and internationally on the world drug problem, and we will continue to do our part in advancing the international drug-policy agenda. Let the promises made in this special session assist us in changing course so that we can move towards a more peaceful, healthy and just society.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 53/216, of 23 March 1998, I now call on the observer of the World Customs Organization.

Ms. Hinojosa: On behalf of the World Customs Organization (WCO), it is a great pleasure and an honour for me to address this special session of the General Assembly on issues of high priority in relation to the world drug problem.

The World Customs Organization is made up of180 members — the customs administrations around the world — which together process more than 98 per cent of global trade. Throughout the course of the special session, we have heard from many Heads of State and delegations about the incredible efforts under way with regard to prevention and rehabilitation of drug users. We have also heard about the importance of sensible deterrence and punishment practices for the individual drug user. But we have also heard of the importance of the rule of law in civil societies.

Customs is the first line of defence at national borders, as it is in charge of both legitimate and illegal cross-border trade. Customs' traditional role as a purely revenue-oriented agency has grown to encompass other such areas as interdicting drug trafficking and fighting terrorism, especially through the detection of small arms and strategic goods. Its role has also expanded to combating trafficking in currency, counterfeit products and environmentally sensitive goods. All in all, it addresses many facets of organized crime.

The World Customs Organization is concerned about the challenges faced by customs and its partner agencies from illicit drug trafficking. Customs administrations are per se permanently dealing with international supply-chain developments in legitimate trade. As a consequence, customs also notes new developments in illicit trade in general and in drugs in particular. The WCO strongly supports intelligence-led and risk-based customs-enforcement activities, which is a prerequisite for successful interventions, while still ensuring an adequate level of trade facilitation. That is a sensible balance to keep.

The WCO Drugs and Precursor Programme is aimed at countering the global illegal trade in substances that are subject to drug restrictions and prohibition laws. The programme consists of several major components. First, there is the Container Control Programme under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the WCO, which now also includes an air-cargo-control segment. It also includes Project AIRCOP, which focuses on drug smuggling by air passengers, implemented in cooperation with the UNODC, Interpol and the Global K9 Forum, and the coordination and support for regional and global operations geared to tackling drug trafficking, including precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances (NPS). It also includes the design, implementation and support of global operations together with key partner organizations in another key component of the programme, tackling different dimensions and emerging threats in drug-trafficking issues.

Just one example of the many activities implemented in this domain is Operation CATalyst, which was initiated in November 2015, to promote responses and consolidated efforts among the international customs community against the threat posed by proliferation of new psychoactive substances. The operation pulled together the participation of 94 member administrations, nine regional intelligence liaison offices and five international organizations and enforcement bodies, including the International Narcotics Control Board, UNODC, the European Police Office, INTERPOL and the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force. This one operation resulted in the seizure of more than 13,000 kilogrammes of drugs in 371 cases, of which 1,435 kilogrammes were specifically NPS-related.

The training of customs officers is a key element in the success of these operations, and that training plays a significant role in the framework of the support the WCO offers to its members. The training provided allows officers to learn the latest risk-management techniques, concealment methods and previously detected drug routes.

To support swift international exchange of relevant information and intelligence, the WCO provides support to the regional intelligence liaison offices, which also play an important role in capacity-building and operational activities. We also have secure international communication, which is ensured through the WCO's Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform. Our members also provide periodic information related to their seizures at the national and regional levels.

The WCO publishes an annual illicit-trade report that contains five sections, one of which is dedicated to drugs. The objective of the report is to raise awareness on emerging threats, highlight customs efforts and contribute information to help customs authorities to develop efficient, effective strategies. The section on drugs in the *2014 Illicit Trade Report* clearly shows an increase in the new drug category of NPS, which evidences customs' proactive approach to tackling this emergent threat. Overall, there were approximately 1,250 tons of cannabis, 343 tons of psychoactive substances, 107 tons of khat, 66 tons of cocaine and 11 tons of heroin. The NPS seizures increased from approximately 3 tons in 2013 to 81 tons in 2014, to now 343 tons in 2015. This is a serious growing threat.

Finally, it is all about partnerships, and, as is evidenced by the fight against drug trafficking, a concerted approach is required. Accordingly, the WCO works closely with other law-enforcement agencies and international partners such as the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotics Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, INTERPOL, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre and UNODC, just to name a few.

The WCO appreciates this opportunity to highlight the important role that customs administrations play in combating drug trafficking. We stand ready to collaborate with our partners and international organizations in support of our members to bring forth the necessary capacity-building, operations-interdiction and sharing of experiences and best practices in this arena.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.